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Sumner Ellis.

"He being dead yet speaketh"

FAITH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

A Memorial

OF

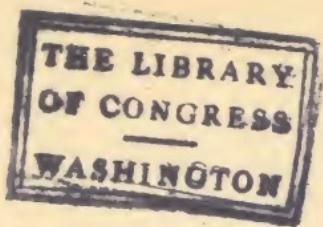
SUMNER ELLIS, D.D.

WITH AN OUTLINE OF HIS LIFE AND MINISTRY

BY REV. C. R. MOOR



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P R E F A C E.

THE sermons contained in this volume are selected from those written by Dr. ELLIS in the more recent years of his ministry, and are printed with only the changes necessary to avoid the repetition usual in sermons written at widely separated intervals and for various congregations. Three,—“The Universal Intuition,” “The Christ Consciousness,” and “Faith confirmed by Progress,”—were included in a series entitled “The Grounds of Faith,” delivered in Chicago in 1882; and the last in the volume, “Religion the Vital Bond,” is that with which he ended his earthly ministry in St. Paul’s Church, July 13, 1884.

In view of the responsibility which attaches to the publication after the author’s death of

sermons not written for that purpose, it is perhaps needless to remark that the selection has been made with all possible care. It is believed that those now printed represent the best thought of Dr. Ellis, and are good examples of his fine literary expression. They exhibit not only his clear thinking on some of the highest themes of the pulpit, but also his artistic perception, his classical sympathies, his positive delight in all forms of exalted moral sentiment, his rare insight and poetic sensibility, and more than all his profound Christian faith and devout spirit. If character may be read (as we are assured)—

“In those fallen leaves which kept their green,
The noble letters of the dead,”

his friends may naturally expect in these sermons of Sumner Ellis—so rich in thought, exalted in sentiment, and refined in expression—much of that which was best and highest in himself; and from their study others may also learn the secret of his personal influence, understand something of his peculiar genius as a preacher, and find an

explanation of the attachment which was felt for him as a pastor and a friend.

It remains to add that the biographical portion of the volume has been prepared by Dr. Ellis's intimate friend and associate in the ministry, the Rev. C. R. Moor, as an appropriate introduction to the sermons. The volume is published in the conviction that it will be received with gratitude by the Church as a memorial of one widely beloved and honored as a faithful minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a cultivated preacher of that Faith and Righteousness which the sermons so finely set forth.

J. S. CANTWELL.

CHICAGO, *December, 1886.*



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MEMORIAL OF SUMNER ELLIS.

SUMNER ELLIS was born in North Orange, Massachusetts, on the 17th of May, 1828. His father's name was Seth, and his mother's Susanna Cheney. He was the youngest of ten children, three of whom died when less than two years old; the others all became worthy heads of families, and three—Caroline, Edwin, and Joseph Warren—are yet living. His parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents were farmers and farmers' wives, industrious and rigidly upright in conduct.

Sumner was neither born nor reared in an atmosphere of culture. His early school advantages were comprised in eight or ten weeks a year; later, when his time for schooling was made exceptional in the town, it was

extended a few weeks; but all these advantages were only such as the district school-system afforded as it was about fifty years ago, in the then far back country. His childhood also was passed before the age of wonderful child-literature,— papers, magazines, books,— as it was before this age of curious, fascinating, and instructive child toys and games. He was what was then called “a good scholar;” he learned his lessons easily, and usually stood at the head of his class. “Whether at school, at work, or play, he calculated to take the lead. He would jump a higher fence, or coast down a steeper hill, than any of his playmates.” He was enthusiastic in fishing and in hunting, but was as warm in his opposition to every kind of cruelty to insect, fish, bird, or any dumb animal, as he was in his kindness to all human beings. Fond as he was of play and social amusements, he loved better what books he had, and often gave evenings to reading that other boys of the neighborhood passed in sports. At times, when working in the field, he carried a book in his pocket, and

improved many leisure moments consulting it,—thus making up as well as he could for the poverty of his school privileges.

Although this boy did not early breathe the saturating and bracing atmosphere of generations of scholars,—his opportunities for schooling were meagre, and his advantages of reading narrow,—the book of Nature was wide open before him; her views and lessons from near and far were spread richly around him. West Hill and Tulley Mountain stood in plain sight of the house in which his grandfather, father, and he were born, while from various parts of the farm the lovely and grand scenery of Vermont and New Hampshire blessed his eyes. Those impressions were never lost; they remained with him when his journeyings became extensive, helping to cultivate his vision until he saw very deeply into the world called “natural.” Besides, he had large training of the moral sense; not one of the five sons and two daughters of this Ellis family was known ever to use tobacco or intoxicating liquor in any shape or way. Conscience and the affections were wide awake

in that home. The stern, exacting virtues of the father, the fine, delicate, sweet qualities of the mother,—which Sumner in after years often took with him into his pulpit to illustrate some high ideals of life,—and the warm tides of sisterly, brotherly, and neighborly feeling moved through him and enriched him beyond expression. Moreover, the family were associated with, and active among, the small body of Universalists worshipping in the town. Seth Ellis, called junior, was the leading man of the parish. For many years the pastor was the Rev. Levi Ballou,—a warm personal friend of his people; and this large household knew well how to profit from the advantage. The youngest of the family certainly needed no urging to make him a constant attendant at church and Sunday-school; it would have required urging to have kept him away, after his higher nature was especially kindled, as it was very early. Mr. Ballou helped him in many ways about his studies; and if the idea of the ministry for a profession was born in his own youthful mind without the influence of the direct

words of any one, his pastor surely did much towards nourishing and maturing it. And the young parishioner, in turn, served this wise and tender friend in many ways about his parish interests, seeming to be "his right hand man, or boy."

It would be unwise to fail to recognize the wholesome forces that come from all the best advantages of early culture. Is it not also wise to try to recognize the reality of such education as comes from a much harder course, —that is obtained by conquering difficulties at the price of great struggles, not only in spite of, but sometimes because of them? We need not guess by which course more men reach sound learning and high conditions of discipline and life. It is enough, on the one hand, to know there are many who ascend, seemingly borne along by the breath of every favoring circumstance, and, on the other, many who climb up rugged steeps to their victories, and do not know they have struggled and bled until they have won; and sometimes not then.

Sumner remained at home until he was

eighteen years old, laboring on his father's farm, except the three months annually that he attended the district school, and the times he worked out his father's highway taxes at eight cents an hour. Occasionally he was invited to dinner by Moses Morton, whose name will appear a few pages farther on. Then for a full year he attended the Academy at New Salem, the next town west of Orange. He improved those opportunities with rare earnestness, and made such progress as those who are constantly engaged in study are not so likely to experience. He knew then, and at various stages of his development afterwards, that there are special blossoming seasons on life's ways, symbolized by certain changes of spring, when Nature *leaps* forth into verdure and bloom, forward towards summer and its yearly wealth and glory, more completely in a few days than during the several preceding weeks.

In the autumn of 1847 the subject of this memorial, having passed his nineteenth birthday, was one of a company of young men and women that made the beginning of Melrose Seminary, at West Brattleboro, Vermont.

The principal was the present Rev. J. S. Lee, D.D., now one of the professors of St. Lawrence University Theological School. Sumner had already thought much of his profession, and had fully chosen the ministry. He was at work with fixed purpose and determined will. Dr. Lee says, "He was a favorite scholar, thirsting for knowledge, industrious, faithful, thorough, independent in his researches, yet willing to listen to his teachers; social, pleasant as a companion, popular with all classes. He began the study of Latin, and afterwards took up Greek, at the same time pursuing his studies in English. His essays were marked by simplicity and earnestness, elevated in tone and thought, spiritual, devotional. He was connected with the seminary about three years, going out to teach winters." For one of his age, he was mature in physique and manly in appearance, having attained his height and full size at twenty. He never increased in weight afterwards, but from the effects of the heavy tasks he set himself as student, and the pressing burdens of his earliest preaching and pastoral experiences, before

reaching twenty-five he lost several pounds, which he never regained. He was tall, broad of shoulder, muscular, and thin; his features were large, but well proportioned and finely moulded; eyes deep-set, pleasant brown, mild and inviting, clear and penetrating; hair thick and heavy, so dark a brown as to be easily mistaken for black. When in Brattleboro he much resembled a highly cultivated, truly accomplished, and deservedly popular Congregationalist who had been settled several years in the ministerial office in that town, and was more than ten years his senior; each of these men was often mistaken for the other. The friends of the younger were happy to be thus confirmed in their prejudice as to his fine ministerial presence. Probably some of them thought more of the fact because in that small country school there were not less than six intimate classmates with hearts turned towards the ministry of the Universalist Church. They all carried out their purpose, and have made honorable records. Their names, standing alphabetically, are, Ballou, Crehore, Ellis, Fisher, Goodenough, M'Collester.

It was during this period,—in the spring of 1848,—that the writer of these pages made his acquaintance. The young student read his first public hymn on Sunday before the young pastor's congregation; and from the time the one was twenty and the other twenty-three, our intimate friendship grew more intense and valuable. We did not always see each other every year, or correspond continuously so often. Sometimes we did both very much oftener,—as frequently, doubtless, as men not living in the same house, or having special business relations, are ever likely to do. Sometimes the distance between us was as great as from the Kennebec to the Mississippi; sometimes farther than the stretch of the broadest ocean. Intelligent sympathy, however, feels the pulsations of life, and knows its drift thousands of miles away, even when no words fly back and forth for years. Nor was our friendship of the kind that reveals everything to its confidant; many surface, incidental thoughts, and other things, each withheld from the other, to the perfect satisfaction of both, whether we kept them

largely to ourselves, or told them less or more to other persons. This is the reason why I may not be able so well to illustrate some passages of Ellis's life as I might otherwise have been, or as some others may be. It was at this time that he began to preach, keeping up the practice of being an occasional supply until his ordination. His first sermon was delivered in West Brattleboro; text: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us." But he always claimed, and frequently recalled the incident, that the first money he received for preaching came from me,—about the only money matter of which we ever especially talked. To an unusual degree, even for a clergyman, he lived on the higher side of things. There must have been seasons when his treasury was low, if not empty; and at any time before he was fifty, it would have taken but a very few thousand dollars to make him feel comfortably independent. They would have actually made him thus. The higher things were so much more real to him than the lower; he touched above so solidly, and

below so lightly, that he never could have troubled himself very much for mere earthly substances, unless at some late day he had found himself in absolute want. Money for exalted purposes and noble uses he understood; but how to live serenely and richly in spirit on as little as any one in his position, he also understood.

Early in 1850 Sumner Ellis began his direct mental preparation for the ministry. This was with the Rev. Hosea Ballou, 2d., D.D., pastor in Medford. He was a brother of the Orange minister, one of the most accomplished scholars the Universalist denomination has produced, and a few years later first President of Tufts College. The studies were, Paley's "Natural Theology," Paley's "Evidences of Christianity," Butler's "Analogy," Greek New Testament, some commentaries, Robinson's "English Harmony of the Gospels," D'Aubigné's "History of the Reformation," Church histories, and other books, — by the standard theological authors of that time. The teacher and friend, though not a theological professor, knew all

such works thoroughly, and he frequently received a few students into his family. One of the six young men mentioned preceded Mr. Ellis at that shrine of many ripe scholars as well as early students. He says of the favored opportunity: "But best of all, we learned from Dr. Ballou's experience, and drank in something of his wonderful conscientiousness and spirit of devotion to his work. Nobody has ever yet written just what should be written of his remarkable private life and character." Well may the pupil say this of that wise and beloved master, who with wife and all his children lives wholly in that kingdom of light and love of which he knew so much when on earth. The entire family have gone; and no person, save this fellow-pupil and friend, could have made the information contained in this paragraph complete. In October, 1851, the younger of these students was invited to a settlement as pastor; and with less than two years of such instruction and home influence, he proceeded to the duties of his profession.

Important events thicken in the life of this young man. Sumner Ellis and Mary Jane, daughter of Moses Morton and Mary Ann Holmes Fay, were married at North Orange, Oct. 28, 1851. The officiating clergyman was the long-time pastor and personal friend of both families, the Rev. Levi Ballou. These young persons had grown up from earliest childhood in the same neighborhood; they were mutually attracted when she had to lisp his name, attended the same district-school and Sunday-school, sat in adjoining pews of the old meeting-house, and later were much in each other's company as students of Melrose Seminary. "Theirs was one of those rare and happy unions which grow in beauty from the sweet confidence and trust of the little child to the full maturity and glory of life." It was no accident that their marriage was solemnized at the exact time he entered completely upon the work of the Christian ministry. They went at once to the activities of the profession in which, if he became a model pastor, she proved herself no less a pastor's model wife.

The venerable Rev. Sebastian Streeter, who in his prime was one of the most eloquent of preachers and successful of pastors, had become enfeebled by disease and by the rapidly approaching infirmities of age. He was the popular minister of the First Universalist Society of Boston,—the old Hanover Street; yet his friends felt he needed a colleague. With rare unanimity, a call was given to Sumner Ellis, which he accepted. This meant for him more of toiling care and wearing responsibility than he could then possibly measure, or than those of whatever age or calling, not experienced in such beginnings of professional life, can at all comprehend. The greater the consecration, the larger the tax that the brain and heart must always pay at the altars of devotion and work, the wider and tenderer the services to which the never-silent voices are calling on every side. The ordination and installation were solemnized on the 11th of November, 1851. Father Streeter, as he was familiarly called, preached the sermon; the Rev. Messrs. Goodrich, Webster, Miner,

Chapin, O. A. Skinner, and H. Ballou, 2d, participated in the services. Of the eight clergymen in the pulpit on that occasion only the last had the honorary degree of D.D., — afterwards all but one or two received the honor. Some of the changes of the intervening thirty-five years are further indicated by the fact that six of those eight men have passed into the realm which “eye hath not seen.” The new minister was a few days less than twenty-three years and six months old, and was not so thoroughly furnished for his work as he ardently desired. Almost the entire labor of the pulpit and parish came at once upon him. He never heard Father Streeter preach except at his ordination and installation; but he was frequently helped by the words of wisdom and encouragement which fell from the lips of the senior pastor in the famous conference meetings of that society in those days. He set himself earnestly at work in the study, Sunday-school, conference-meeting; with the church organization, the sick, dying, and sorrowing of the parish and community; among

the young, the old, all ages and conditions. In all directions that his duty pointed he did his best to be worthy his position, having all the sympathy and aid from his young wife that she was able to give. Already the American population from the Hanover Street vicinity had begun rapidly to remove to other sections; some Protestant meeting-houses were abandoned by their congregations about that time; yet all the interests of the parish of which our friend was colleague-pastor were fully sustained. In pastoral efficiency there was no lack suggested from any quarter; and even as a preacher there were but few in that large audience who detected any failure to feed the flock continuously with all that the hungry and weary soul needs. For some reason, however,—perhaps an impulse to breathe a little more freely for a few weeks from the burden of sermon-making; possibly some lurking objection to his colleague relations; probably more than all things else a thirst and hope for longer and deeper communings with his books: at any rate, towards the end of 1853 he resigned his position in

Boston, bidding the congregation and his venerable senior a loving farewell on the last Sunday of that year, in the midst of abundant and warm expressions of regret, esteem, and affection.

On the 10th of that December Mr. Ellis had accepted a call to the pastoral office of the First Universalist Society of Salem. He at once removed, and began his ministry the first Sunday of 1854. The Salem parish had been blessed with the labors of a succession of remarkably able clergymen, and his immediate predecessor was the late Rev. Ebenezer Fisher, D.D., first President of the Canton, New York, Theological School. There, as in Boston, he gave himself without reserve to every interest of parish organizations and need of pastoral life. He worked easier and preached better than in his former position; he was more widely felt among the general public, pursued his studies with truer system and larger breadth, took firmer hold of the great problems of theology and life, re-examined the grounds of his own faith and of other faiths; doubted, to believe more

intensely; found time, at least occasionally, to look up into the natural heavens and consider their lessons, abroad over the fields and ocean, and listen to their voices. A writer from Salem, describing "one of many tramps in old Essex" with this friend at that time, says, "the two have been on almost every square acre of the region round about, and on the harbor too."

During this period a class of young clergymen in the vicinity of Boston, including our friend, banded together for mutual improvement, particularly on the spiritual side of life. As fresh baptisms came to their souls, their people were renewed again and again. Three or four of these brethren came to my house in another State, on their way to a religious conference about thirty miles beyond. Their zeal was so ardent, and much of their talk sounded so like the experiences of new converts, that I ventured to ask them: "How long is it since you first experienced religion?" I think only one was silent; the rest, turning the answer particularly towards him, feeling sure he would take

it serenely, replied, "Ellis was born again about three months ago!" The complete new birth of the Gospel is not one, but many; it is a succession of soul-awakenings and renewals unto perfection. Doubtless the "Essex Ministerial Circle" was the best thing of the kind Universalist clergymen have yet had. This Salem pastor was one of the most interested of the members; giving whenever occasion seemed decidedly to urge him, but receiving with much more ardor and satisfaction.

The writer inclines to the opinion that among our churches this friend of the young was the first to introduce the literary social element and organization; and, social as he was himself, this with him was more literary than social. He had his own methods, usually suggesting such readings and topics of discussion as the mental activities of the times seemed to render most fitting and useful. He began this extra work with the years now in review, and the meetings were at his house. If there were then currents of deep religious feeling moving among the people, there were also

waves of scepticism and infidelity. Many evenings were passed in the reading and consideration of "certain scriptures." The interest and membership of that circle extended considerably beyond the limits of his congregation, or brethren of like religious faith. This was the beginning of those clubs, religious and literary, of various grades, that he contributed so largely to introduce and sustain in different places, both in parishes when he was pastor, and outside of them when he was engaged in more purely literary work, and which afforded so much pleasure and profit to so many persons. Conspicuous among these were those in Chicago, Boston, and Cambridge. And Ellis was particularly the friend of the aged; had time permitted, or had he thought it as essential, he might have arranged evenings or afternoons for special readings among them. If the ways in which he sought, all along his life, with much industry and love, to comfort and cheer them could be told, it would appear that his sympathies were wide enough to embrace the extremes of youth and old age, as well

as the extremes of culture and ignorance, of goodness and the want of it. On occasions of social greetings, his returns from short or long absences, or whatever the peculiarity of the meetings, if there did not come as many of the old as of the young to greet him, it was because the former were not so numerous as the latter.

Notwithstanding all this no direct ministerial duty was neglected, and every department of the Salem parish prospered. The meeting-house was thoroughly remodelled; the Sunday-school — larger than ever before, and one of the very largest and most thoroughly organized, if not in every way the foremost of the denomination to which it belonged — outgrew the vestry, which was enlarged and beautified; the church organization increased; conference-meetings were notably good; congregations were continuously and conspicuously large. He preached twice on Sunday as regularly as once, and not infrequently three times. The preacher in those days was expected often to bring forth things new and old for the waiting

hearer. This, too, was expected without any vacation season, as the rule; and so the number of sermons given to the same congregation by the average city pastor in this part of the country per year then, was more than double the number delivered by the average city pastor now. To all human appearance Ellis enjoyed one of the most successful pastorates that that honorable, large, and, for its creed, ancient parish ever knew. In spite of this, he decided to vacate the position before fully completing his fifth year, mainly because he had wrought so hard in the study and in the parish that he was kindled with desires for larger attainments and truer results. He wanted to know more, and to do better. His ideal rose so high above the quality of his best work, when so much seemed necessary, that most of it was poor and mean to his own appreciation. He determined to pause a while from full activities among the many-sided labors of his profession, and to have a season devoted almost wholly to study, and to such further mental development and heart-nurture as should

especially refit and reinstall him in the work of life. He closed his relations with the Salem parish at the end of August, 1858, having a strong hold upon all classes with whom he had been associated. The young—the most numerous of the persons especially dependent upon the aid such a man is able to give—felt very deeply at first that they could not do without him. But his influence was not of the kind which inspired more love for himself than for the truth he sought to unfold and impress by word and deed.

This successful, aspiring, conscientious clergyman, with the weight of seven years of intense ministerial labor and experience upon and within him, went to Cambridge in the fall of 1858. It is not understood that he entered any of the classes of Harvard University; he had liberty to work in the academic, scientific, and theological departments. He attended lectures on metaphysics, and studied in some departments of chemistry, botany, and zoölogy, reading as thoroughly as he could the different works upon these subjects. Under the tuition of Professor Agassiz,

he was deeply interested in biology; and the reader of his sermons will find more than one reference to this great naturalist. Ellis devoted considerable time to the German schools of thought in philosophy and theology. He received special aid by personal intercourse with President Dr. James Walker. He knew Emerson well by study and personal interviews; at this time he carefully read Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, and Tyndall. The Rev. S. H. M'Collester, D. D., one of the six special seminary students, who had rare opportunities for knowing the work of this friend then, says: "He mastered Carlyle, De Quincey, Landor, Plutarch, Addison, Martineau, Humboldt, and many other authors. Shakspeare he read and read and read." It is impossible to draw the line between what he accomplished in Cambridge then, and what he did there and elsewhere before and afterwards. He did much solid study and careful reading at that time, following in ways he had previously started, and making beginnings in some departments which he continued to the end of his career. It was not later

than this date that he became fond of the old poets and scholars of Greece and Rome. His mind, long in pursuit of the best literature, reached the degree of culture and refinement in which he saw the best things in thought, taste, and art. While at Harvard, he usually supplied on Sundays in Brighton.

In March, 1860, he became pastor of the First Universalist Society in Lynn. He preached there to many with an effectiveness rarely excelled; shaped characters of young men and women; helped children into the kingdom of heaven; supplied the aged with the rich nourishment of love and trust; proved what he sought to be in his previous pastorates,—a special messenger of consolation to the sorrowing; and did in every way the work of the Christian minister. Mrs. Ellis also is reported as “doing a great deal that was never pushed into public notice,” as she did in Boston and Salem. It was in Lynn that she won the reputation of organizing the first infant-class of that Sunday-school, and one of the earliest in the denomination,—which ever since has been a conspicuous illustration

of what may be done in such nurseries of early childhood in religion. The sea-air of Lynn was unfavorable to her health, and the settlement there was terminated in the autumn of 1862. That winter Mr. Ellis and his wife went to New York. Soon he was complimented with an invitation to supply the pulpit of the Church of the Divine Paternity, and do the parish work during the proposed extended absence abroad of its renowned minister, the Rev. E. H. Chapin, D. D. Here the pastoral duties were discharged with an unusual degree of fidelity. The pressing public demands made upon the famous Dr. Chapin's time and strength, rendered it absolutely impossible for him, during the previous many years, to do much home work outside of his pulpit, except to attend funerals and visit the sick and sorrowing,—which he did with great faithfulness and impartiality. Hence much needed service awaited the temporary pastor, and few knew how to do it so effectively. He visited many families that were largely helped by his kindly personal communications, and he strengthened various organizations in the parish with

his judicious, gentle, firm, loving hand. Whatever the advantage gained by him in these ways for his pulpit administrations, he held a much larger congregation than was anticipated, in view of the fact that usually a stranger in the pulpit of this marvellous, if not matchless orator, or almost any exchange for a single service in those days, would tell very sadly against the size of the audience. This was inevitable, because of the many strangers that thronged Dr. Chapin's church. In this delicate and critical position the congregations were more than respectable from first to last. Many listened, and blessed Heaven for their privileges.

Having closed his services with the Church of the Divine Paternity, the "Rev. Sumner Ellis commenced his labors as associate pastor of the Shawmut Universalist Church, Boston, with the Rev. T. B. Thayer, D. D., June 1, 1863. Of his work there it may be truly said that he was successful. He was a fine sermonizer, thoroughly consecrated to his pastorate, and a devout, earnest, humble minister of the church. He had a deep interest in the Sunday-

school, and was always an appreciative friend of the teachers. Of him it may be affirmed he was the friend of the children, the guide of the young, the companion of those in active life and of the aged. He was a leader of his people, respected by all and loved by all." If an authoritative statement can be made, it is this; and what more need be said, except that he resigned this charge Oct. 31, 1865? The parish had not arranged for two permanent salaries, and every feeling of the associate pastor led him voluntarily and without hesitation to relinquish his place. The purpose was carried out almost as soon as fixed. Scarcely did his friends have time to consider the movement — many, including most of his relatives, knew nothing of it — until, with his uncertain fortunes in his hands, he was on his way West. Exactly what his feelings were, may not have been understood. There is no question, however, that he was always self-respecting, and no less considerate of the rights of others; always just, kind, generous, brave. His relations with Dr. Thayer and the whole Shawmut Church

remained ever cordial. He was always welcomed in their homes and pulpit, where in later years he often visited and spoke.

At that time Mr. Ellis meditated some business venture; but he soon wrote to an intimate friend that he concluded he "was not made for that sort of thing." *Surely not.* It was only a surface-impulse born of a weary brain; and such waves pass over thousands of men in like circumstances, the substantial drift of whose lives is as fixed as was his. Sumner Ellis permanently absorbed in business! As well think of a fish living permanently in the air, or a bird in the water. He preached successfully in Milwaukee and Dubuque; he did literary work in Chicago, and became acting pastor of St. Paul's Universalist Church in that city. The Rev. W. H. Ryder, D. D., was then much worn by his long and important pastorate, and he sought rest. He knew his man, and requested the Milwaukee pastor, if he could not be induced to carry forward the work so favorably started there, to take his until he should be ready to resume it. The popular minister of that well-known and influ-

ential parish proposed extensive journeyings and a vacation which should fully renew his life. It is believed that every interest of St. Paul's was well considered and sustained. The trust in every way was honored, and with such recognized satisfaction that when, a few years later, the Church of the Redeemer in that city was in particular need of "the right minister," it did not ask him to become a candidate, but called him on his reputation. Later still, when St. Paul's again desired his services, of course the dignity of people and minister was observed in the negotiations. Mr. Ellis left Chicago late in 1870. He was settled in Newark, New Jersey, November the 6th of that year. "He was greatly beloved by all who came within the charmed circle of his personal influence." He wrote some of his best sermons while there; and the report from the church is, "he did most by his example, and best by the power of his refined thought and sensibilities."

Closing his ministry in Newark, April 1, 1872, Mr. Ellis went directly to Boston for long, earnestly desired literary work. During

two years and a half he gave himself to this with deep enthusiasm, supplying for the most part on Sundays in East Cambridge. The particular work at this time was the production of his book, "At Our Best; or, Making the Most of Life." That volume was the fruit of varied and deep experience, wide and careful reading, studied and refined writing. It contains no chapter, perhaps no page, without illustrations of highest thought, deepest feeling, purest expression. If opened anywhere, fine authorship will be detected; and the sentences must generally be read more than once or twice, if one would see all the beauties they contain, or take in all the shades of meaning. Some one calls the book "a choice mosaic of delightful reading for persons of literary taste." Another says, "Its charming pages, inculcating a cheerful and healthy philosophy of life, will continue to make hosts of friends as the volume becomes more widely known." When it appeared, it was handsomely noticed in many directions. In style, the essays were Emersonian.

During the earlier stages of our friend's much reading he was bookish. Who is not at such times? But later his reservoir of knowledge became too large and too full for any direct, perceptible effect to be produced upon his thought or style, though he devoured books by the dozen per month. In the infancy of its development, the human mind always becomes very largely the food that is crammed into it; in the full manhood of its growth and maturity, it assimilates the world of thought, and is itself that. A barrel of water poured into a brook becomes the brook for a while; but the water of the Mississippi—yea, and of all the rivers of the globe—flows into the ocean, and is ocean. Whether it began at this period, or at an earlier or later one, for years there was a conflict in the mind of our brother as to which he more earnestly desired to do,—ministerial, or literary work. He loved both, and he wrought faithfully in each, when either had supreme hold of him. Now and then both seemed to have large sway over him at the same time. It remained to be determined if

either should at length more fully possess him, and if so, which.

Mr. Ellis was invited in the fall of 1874 to become minister of the Church of the Redeemer in Chicago. He began his work in that relation in October. The following citation is authentic; and though considerably representative of outward phases (for present purposes it is all the better for that), the author of this memorial is glad to present it to the reader:

“ Mr. Ellis came to us at a time of severe financial depression. The society was heavily in debt,—so much so as to lose all legal claim upon the church building in which it worshipped. For two years the pastor voluntarily relinquished five hundred dollars of his three thousand salary. With the inspiration of his direct encouragement, the parish by heroic efforts raised the money to redeem the property and make extensive repairs and improvements upon the church building. During his ministry the parish adopted the ‘ pay as you go’ principle, and the trustees have been able to report ‘ no debt’ up to the present time. There were no sensational revivals, no immense accessions to society or church during his pastorate; but the parish was kept in a healthy condition, and solidified noticeably under

his ministry. Ninety-two new members united with the church. His preaching was of a high intellectual order. He inaugurated the system of an annual course of lectures, assisted in securing talented lecturers, and always gave one or more himself during each course. He secured the formation of a society among the young people of the congregation, called the 'Willing Workers,' whose name was changed after he left us to 'The Ellis Society.' He formed a 'Tennyson Class,' whose readings, under his supervision, were a source of much intellectual pleasure and improvement. He helped the Sunday-school materially by meeting with the teachers at stated times, and keeping up their interest in the lessons by his wise suggestions. He also formulated a regular series of lessons upon various portions of Scripture, from time to time, for the use of the school. Mr. Ellis offered his resignation, to take effect at the end of five years' service among us; and when this was received, the society held a special meeting, at which it was unanimously voted to ask him to withdraw it, and a committee of five was appointed to urge him to remain with us. The picture of his countenance now hangs in our Sunday-school room, and the recollection of his personality and of his good words and work in our behalf is forever enshrined in our hearts."

It was during this pastorate that Mr. Ellis's little volume, "Hints on Preaching," went to

press. This was the result of greater study than is easily imagined. He had the work in mind a number of years,—some time, in fact, before the beginning of this Chicago pastorate,—and he prepared for a much larger book and a more exhaustive treatment of the subject than he compiled. What was published, contains “hints” of his own work, not less than upon the great theme treated. He says of his selections: “They are central ideas which their authors have elaborated into chapters, . . . abridgments of wisdom,” or, as he quotes Cervantes, “short sentences drawn from long experience.” He selects very largely, if not wholly, from original sources of not less than sixty authors in this department of Christian literature. He puts one name to from fifteen to twenty paragraphs, not familiar in this realm of thought; and it is doubtful if any reader knows where to look for other sayings of the kind by “Lisle.” That is the name over which our brother, for some reason, wrote some of his own thoughts; and there is no hazard in the opinion that much in those

paragraphs is not out of place standing on pages with the best things of the best authors on the art and spirit of preaching. After having said much else upon the point, he says this with reference to preparation for the beginnings of public prayers:—

“ But the best safeguard against the stale and stereotyped introduction to pulpit prayer is a soul already kindled by the length and strength of its closet communions, and that goes to the temple, not to introduce itself to God, but as one already in the midst of its spiritual interview with him, alive to his presence, rejoicing in his mercies, and hopeful of his continued grace.”

With like limitations, he says this about the preacher’s sympathy with the people whom he addresses:—

“ The speaker who attempts to captivate his audience by a frequent use of the phrases, ‘ My beloved friends ! ’ ‘ My cherished hearers ! ’ ‘ My dear brethren ! ’ will only disgust. The love that will win and bring hearts into the best relations with the orator is that which shows itself in deeds, and not in words. It will appear in the choice of the theme, and in the toil that is put into its treatment

to render it of service. It will show itself in the humanity of the preacher's thought and discussion, and will need no bell to notify its presence. The more it is hidden, the more it will appear; and the less its avowal, the greater its sway."

This is among the things he declares concerning the specific purpose of preaching:

"Themes are not final, but instrumental. 'To what *end* am I about to discuss this topic?' should be the searching question with which every minister should come to the task of preparing his discourse; and if he finds in his heart no distinct response, let him set about discovering one, that his conscience may stand void of offence, and his mind and heart acquire direction and impulse. As the racer runs for a goal, and the sailor sails for a port, and the lawyer pleads for a verdict, let the preacher preach for some Christian result that shall inspire and justify his toil."

Take these from his words upon positiveness in preaching: —

"It is well to deny errors, it is better to affirm truths. But it is worst of all to foster a general distrust of all conclusions, so that a congregation will only know that it does not know, and only

believe that there is nothing to be believed. This state of mental uncertainty will soon lead to the questioning of moral verdicts. As a man must love art and music because they address themselves to his constitution, so must he love religion if it be presented to him in its positive and self-evidencing elements. Even the atheist, who assumes that the spiritual realm is a fiction, cannot succeed in crowding it out of his thoughts, but comes round to it with a singular frequency, as if his instinct were so strong he could not hold it down ; or rather, as if in the midst of his mental denials his spirit caught views of the ever-precious affirmations, — God, the soul, immortality. Hence that must be the best preaching which appeals to the soul as light to the eye and love to the heart.”

Observe these words, upon various phases of preaching : —

“ Time is a necessary element in the generation of any fine fervor. The Sibyl must mount her tripod for a season of preliminary exercises in order to charge her soul with the true fire of Apollo. . . . Those periods in which most of beauty and force are combined, are births from the brain and the heart in their happy conjunction. Intelligence and emotion leave worthy progeny. . . . One should attend to dressing his fit ideas in attractive costumes by an ideal

process, as Raphael saw his angels in vision before he began the task of transferring them to canvass."

Among the friendships with eminent men formed by Sumner Ellis during his Chicago Church of the Redeemer pastorate, were those of the Rev. Drs. David Swing and H. W. Thomas. The relations between him and the latter were peculiarly interesting and tender. The writer of these pages is pleased in this connection to insert these impressions of Dr. Thomas:—

"The life of one so gentle, so retiring, so entirely free from noise and display, was not great in the popular sense of a bold leadership and daring deeds. Its greatness was in the quiet power of the real, the genuine, the noble, and the good in culture, in spirit, in purpose and deed,—a greatness that is always felt and confessed in the affairs of men and in the progressive movements of society. He was a steady, persistent, and powerful reserve-force, lying back of the more prominent leaders and pushing them forward, and a force on whom they could always rely, and if need be, draw. He was the friend and the helper of every good cause. Beneath the calm surface there was a depth and an intensity that were revealed and felt

in all he did, whether in work or play,—and I was with him in both,—more in work than in play; for such days of recreation were not many. We were together a year in Hebrew; we hunted and fished together, visited together the sick and the well, and together laid out the plans of sermons and read books; and in everything I could but notice and feel this concealed intensity. I think that it shortened his days; and that when he returned from the Old World, where this consuming desire to leave nothing undone and to do everything well, and had for such an inexhaustible field, his reserve physical forces had been so drawn upon that there was nothing left with which to resist the disease of which he died. But if we are to measure life by what one does, and really lives in thought and sentiment, and not by years, Dr. Ellis's life was not short.

“Personally, the friendship of Dr. Ellis during the transitional period when my own thoughts and views were changing, and in the years of controversy and church troubles that followed these changes, was an abiding comfort and support. He was born into a larger faith; I had to find my own way into the better hope through long struggles. He foresaw the end to which my premises and reasonings must lead; but he was too wise and too considerate of my feelings to attempt in any abrupt way to hasten the conclusion. When it was reached,

— not all at once, but slowly, as dawns the day,— we rejoiced together.

“ Other men may be admired for their great learning and ability ; but Dr. Ellis, while not wanting in these, was loved for his real worth,— loved as a friend, loved because he was lovable and loved others.”

Mr. and Mrs. Ellis returned to the vicinity of Boston, after their five years' work with the Church of the Redeemer, late in 1879. They at once took the house, a little way over the Cambridge line, in West Somerville, from which they went in answer to their Chicago call. Their friends soon observed that Mrs. Ellis was to an unusual degree in delicate health. She continued to decline until she died, May 28, 1880. The husband said: “ I never heard her speak an unkind or inconsiderate word. She was one of the gentlest spirits God ever put into a mortal body.” At that time he was reading widely the books and parts of books, ancient and modern, prose and poetry, upon the idea of the indestructibility of the human soul. He purposed to produce in popular, easy, comprehensible

form, if possible, a work upon intimations of immortality. His great sorrow pushed this plan aside. The condition of his heart was such that he cared not for the *arguments* upon this subject. Is it strange? They were even distasteful to him. The consciousness of the great fact, the *feeling* of it, was more than sufficient. Probably he never afterwards, if indeed he had before, attempted to demonstrate to mourners crushed by domestic affliction the truth that the soul is undying; but he always assumed it, as he assumed the existence of God and the spirit in man. To argue about the historical validity of the communion service in the presence of the symbols of Christ's body and blood, is a strange procedure; let such arguments come at other times to those who need them: now its truth cannot be made more evident to the soul than it is. When our dead are near, the eye detects and the heart feels intimations of immortality that are infinitely great, but which the mere philosophical intellect, treating the subject coolly, if it sees or feels these at all, is too proud to weave them into an

argument. Intimations of immortality are everywhere that God and the soul and spiritual truth are; and the results of that reading with the fruits of deeper experiences than can be read out of others' thoughts or lives, were scattered in many ways throughout this believer's work.

Rarely are man and woman so nearly all and all to each other as were this husband and this wife. "They were always together, and seemed of one thought and one heart." That was a sad summer for him; "no centre anywhere, all circumference." That autumn, by special invitation, he went to Chicago and supplied his recent Church of the Redeemer charge for a while, and he particularly aided the parish in settling his successor, as he did, after the resignation of the Rev. W. S. Crowe, in securing the Rev. Charles Conklin for the parish. Then during the holidays, sadder still, if possible, he made his way to Cincinnati, and he supplied the pulpit of his denomination in that city for several months.

With the early summer of 1881, having negotiations in his hands for writing the Life

of the Rev. Dr. Chapin, he went again to the vicinity of Boston. He made his residence this time in Cambridge, very near Harvard University, and with his long-tried friends Mr. and Mrs. John E. Davis. He had boarded with the father of Mr. Davis in Boston when first settled in Hanover Street; and this son was one of many young men, since prominent in all departments of life, upon whose hearts he then took hold, never to let go. He called the privilege of this home "ideal." While meditating, searching for material, and writing the Life of Dr. Chapin, Dr. Ellis passed nearly a year and a half. If the reader observes a title with Mr. Ellis's name not before given in these pages by the author, the explanation is, this is as soon in the order of this record, after it belonged to him, as it could be used, without undue haste to crown him with the honor. Buchtel College gave it to him at its Commencement in 1880, not a year before the time now in review. No man could have worked more conscientiously, or with truer devotion to his subject, than did our friend on his difficult task of

attempting to write a just biography of the wonderful preacher and orator. Days and weeks were occupied in hunting for facts, put into lines, months for data, woven into brief sentences; and then the effort to reach up to and take down upon paper a man who stood so high above most great men, in such true ways that his admirers and strangers shall see him there! He who has not tried that kind of work, praying for light and strength to do the duty faithfully, cannot estimate it. Dr. Ellis would labor as long as he could, and then rush into the open air, call upon friends, go to some place of public instruction or entertainment, or read some favorite author,—this, week after week, and month after month. His graceful pen and much reading, told richly at all points of the work. Reviewers were markedly complimentary. Many ranked the work among the best biographies ever written. “Dr. Ellis’s Life of Dr. Chapin,” says one, in connection with many other things as good, “is a rare and exceedingly unique biography. No other than a master artist could have painted such

a word-picture. Its central figure is grand, whatever view you take of it, with all its shades and touching beauties. Its whole setting is as of precious stones. Like a Madonna of Raphael, the more you study it the more you are enraptured by it."

"Dr. Ellis was surprisingly many-sided, with a curious brain that was a very museum of scraps of knowledge, incidents, and facts of life, quaint stories of authors, poets, and the celebrities of the earth." A Boston reading-club of 1872-1874, that his friends the members insisted upon calling "The Ellis Club," studied with him Dante, Milton, Coleridge, Browning, Tennyson, and others of the poets; and all agreed that "he was an accomplished scholar in English literature, whose poetic insight was almost an unfailing interpreter." An editor who knew him well at different stages of his progress, speaking at one time with him of Morell's "Critical History of the Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century," remarks that he told him then, "he could not 'get the hang,'" declaring that "at a later date he got the full accent."

Again this editor says of him: "He was a student especially of literature; he studied not so much the dilutions and interpretations of the masters as the masters themselves. He did not read comments upon Goethe and Montaigne; he read and re-read Goethe and Montaigne." Dr. Ellis knew thoroughly the great masters in prose and in poetry, and said that he "could find no poet so grand as David, no thinker so profound as Paul, no teacher so complete as Christ."

Had Dr. Ellis left no other evidence, the sermons of this memorial volume prove that he gave large attention in his reading to all questions affecting the validity of religion. In an examination of about three hundred of his sermons there is found "no word the spirit of which any Christian dying could wish to blot," and "no sentence which contradicts the supremacy of this religion, or fails, whenever occasion calls for such use, to be turned to the most wholesome defence or application of it." Whatever else he did, he did not fail to read everything really serviceable to the ministerial profession. He was

familiar with recent materialism; he was every way armed for the defence of historical Christianity, and he knew the deeper things which lie back of and make the true historical possible. He was a thoroughly Christian preacher,—a revelationist rather than an evolutionist. Christ lived in his mind and heart; and his faith was as broad as universal truth, and his sympathies were as wide-reaching as earth, heaven, or hell. Ethical culture he surely had, and æsthetical and classical too,—all contributing more or less to the quality of his simple and mighty Christian beliefs. He saw and felt the truth of Christian things in every direction; and few ministers of the broadest and most truly liberal faith could unfold it so clearly and effectively to the largest and sharpest of human minds by nature and by culture, especially if he could meet them personally, so that questions and answers might immediately follow,—a thing which shallowness and insincerity may well dread.

Dr. Ellis wrote much for various papers and periodicals of his denomination,—now as

transient correspondent, then as regular or editorial contributor; and again as temporary editor. Among the lecture-sermons that he delivered in Chicago was a series on the "Battles of the Churches;" and he prepared courses on Church History, Biography, and General Literature. Of his literary or college and lyceum addresses may be mentioned those upon "Emerson," "Charles Sumner," "Proverbs of Nations," and "Art in Religion." His library at no time, after he was thoroughly started as a student, fairly represented him, because he accomplished so much in the best public libraries of the country, to which he had easy access, and because it was his custom to discard those books of his own that he had outgrown, or which he had used to his full need for particular studies. His instincts, culture, all his methods of thought, were in the direction of fine writing; and in later years, especially, he had great felicity of style. He was, indeed, then a master in the use of words; "none could weave them into more royal webs."

He was deeply interested in all true education; he assisted in determining a site for Dean

Academy, and numbered among his acquaintances and personal friends many, if not all, the leaders in the higher institutions of learning connected with his denomination, and some others. He was a welcome visitor at Tufts College, and always received a cordial hearing when he spoke in the chapel. He went from Chicago to give the address to the graduating class of the Theological School in St. Lawrence University of 1876; Buchtel invited him to deliver its annual oration in 1879; and, as has been seen, the year after, that College gave him his honorary degree. For a number of years he was a trustee of Lombard University, and his counsel was always highly valued. He gave several addresses before that institution, and President the Rev. Dr. White says: "His very presence among young men and women was a stimulant to high endeavor. Dr. Ellis was the embodiment of the highest type of the Christian gentleman."

"Christian gentleman" is what those who knew him well, call him as naturally as they speak his name. A large number of men

who thoroughly understand the meaning of these words, have applied them to him altogether independently of each other. What better can be said of any one? His friends ranked in years among all, from little children to extreme old age; in culture, from beginners to the most advanced; in character, from weakness and sin to the noblest in virtue and the loftiest in saintship,—and for no other reason so surely as that he knew how to be and was a thorough Christian gentleman. He gave the best of all he had and was, as completely to one friend or companion alone, as to the multitude,—a quality and habit which grew in him to the day of his death. He was unique as a minister, and still more so as a man. “His influence was as subtle as the breath of the wild flowers, and as strong and pungent as the scent of the newly ploughed fields.” “His breadth of sympathy, his self-abnegation, his subtle sense of unseen things, we can in terms name; but there was a pervasive, lovable quality in him which eludes all descriptive phrases. He may be classified with such as Charles Lamb, Blaise Pascal, and

the Apostle John. He has won a fame far above the commonplace. His name cannot soon be a finished theme."

In length of pastoral settlements, Dr. Ellis was exceeded by many ministers of much less ability. Temperaments, motives, and objects, as well as circumstances under which ministers labor, differ widely among those equally worthy and useful. If many of the most self-sacrificing and successful have held the longest pastorates, so have many of the most self-sacrificing and successful been the most itinerant. If it has been the policy of some denominations to retain their pastors to the extreme limit of time, the most wonderful for growth of any one in this country has been so organized as absolutely to forbid extended pastorates. Whatever may be the personal preferences of many parishes and of many clergymen at present, and whatever may be best for the cause of religion now, Christianity was founded and widely diffused by travelling missionaries; and whether staying or going, some have lived more and done more in one year, than others in ten years.

Dr. Ellis has made his own record; and in no way has the writer attempted, nor will he attempt, to overstate the truth,—while words fail in some of the best realities of our friend's life fully to express it. He would have advised no man to do exactly as he did; no one would be safe in attempting to *imitate* any peculiarity of another. With right conditions, he favored long pastorates; but he never remained with any parish to accommodate himself. His somewhat frequent changes did not tend to idleness, but to more intense industry; they did not produce narrowness, but greater breadth. The new surroundings, however pleasant or unpleasant, never disturbed the roots of healthy, pure, vigorous life. They were rather among the occasions of deeper foundations, greater centres, wider circumferences, under and over and through all of which pulsated an ever-growing mind and an ever-quicken^g spirit. How else could he have known and served so many persons, read so extensively, written so much, and become the man of generous culture and wide-reaching influence that he

was? Some particular parish or parishes might have had more of him; the world, and the denomination also, would have had less. Otherwise, of course, he would have been a different person, but not Sumner Ellis.

Completing his Life of Dr. Chapin in the summer of 1882, Dr. Ellis had not seen the whole proof of it when he was invited by St. Paul's Church, Chicago, to become their minister, either as supply or pastor, as he should choose. Whatever the name of the relation, it was understood to be temporary, — until the church could make selection of a permanent pastor. St. Paul's parish, however, with the satisfactory arrangement of Dr. Ellis for minister, was disposed to be tardy in looking farther, and urged that he become their pastor. This ministry lasted about two years, — from the beginning of September, 1882, to the middle of July, 1884. Although his purposes were fixed for a brief work in this position, and to devote himself at no distant day more completely than ever to literary pursuits, his pastoral services could

hardly have been more faithfully performed; and his sermons were largely new, many receiving the highest commendations. Among his hearers much of the time were Dr. Ryder and family, and none were more truly expressive of warm appreciation of his best efforts. He felt he had a right to retire from pastoral services, and he pressed the church to call his successor, helping in all practical ways to the right selection and to secure the one towards whom all finally turned,—the Rev. John Coleman Adams, of Lynn, Massachusetts. He kept up his work until the arrival of Mr. Adams in Chicago, and both were happy. He purposed, after a season of absence, to be a faithful parishioner in St. Paul's Church, and to lend a hand in every general reasonable way towards helping forward the cause of righteousness. The literary work he then held more or less clearly in vision, for which his education and instincts had long been directly and indirectly preparing him, and for which in large part he was to travel, was to be only another form of contribution to the service of God and

humanity. He could have done nothing outside the orbit of divine, universal Love,—nothing but would have told deeply in this harmoniously powerful way for the good of the world.

It was during the early part of this ministry, Feb. 5, 1883, that he was united in marriage with Mrs. Addie M. Hall,—a woman of culture and refinement, one of the most devoted members of St. Paul's Church, and much interested in the best progress of Chicago. Their mutual friends everywhere rejoiced anew in the Father by whose mercies broken lives may again find strength and joy in congenial, closely united hearts. Before starting abroad, among the last things done by Dr. and Mrs. Ellis was the making of a generous selection from their books and sending them to the library of Lombard University. Since then, Mrs. Ellis has gathered from the Doctor's library a liberal number and given them to the same institution,—including British poets, Bible commentaries, Greek and Hebrew books, other works on theology and abstruse scientific themes, such

as Darwinism and metaphysics. But it is not intended to indicate that these four hundred and more volumes include his library. Dr. Ellis was a life member of the Art Institute of Chicago, in which he felt great interest; and he anticipated the time would come when he should use his influence especially towards its advancement. Love of beauty in nature, literature, and art, so long growing with his growth, had reached a high degree of perfection.

September 7, 1884, Dr. and Mrs. Ellis left Chicago for New York; and on the 10th they embarked on the Cunard steamer *Gallia* for Europe. No man ever wrote a finer description of a sea-voyage. In ten days they landed in Liverpool. Mrs. Ellis had travelled much in foreign lands, and both were well read in books that related to the purposes of their journey. They knew what they wanted to do, and how to do it. They were there with the definite object of studying only that which does not exist in our own country,— save Nature, which is a daily study to all lovers of her moods, whether at home or abroad.

Unlike many American travellers, they had no morbid curiosity to see everything,—good, bad, and indifferent. The English Lake district gave Dr. Ellis much pleasure, from the beauty of the scenery, the variety and brightness of the coloring, and the association of the Lake Poets. They made a point of stopping at all cathedral towns; and he admired and often spoke of the Carlisle Cathedral window as unique among windows. Edinburgh, so beautiful for situation, so classical in its architecture, was very inviting to their scholarly pursuits. The cathedral town of Durham was a place of great interest to them, as the Norman architecture there is undoubtedly the best in the world. In London they lived in the British Museum, South Kensington, and the National Gallery,—all art. Westminster Abbey seemed somewhat tame and disappointing to him, after seeing other cathedrals. They heard several of the most eminent preachers, but liked best of all the poetical and thoroughly religious sermons of Stopford A. Brooke.

Thus everywhere the situation, natural

scenery, architecture, paintings, and statuary were the special objects which claimed the attention of these travellers, until they arrived in Rome and Southern Italy. Statuary and the Greek temples then seemed to become the themes most inviting to Dr. Ellis. After visiting the Greek remains of Southern Italy and Sicily, and crossing over into Greece, as the glories of ancient Greece unfolded before them it became a puzzling question whether to settle to serious work in a few directions, or take only a cursory view. They determined upon the latter course,—he hoping to return after having studied for a particular work; but both afterwards regretted that they had not lingered. The trip through Germany had for its object mainly the art works. They were greatly delighted with Munich,—mediæval somewhat in its architecture, where Grecian is not imitated, having little commerce, much art and much music, and is animated by the presence of scholars and soldiers. There they revelled in music, to appreciate which their whole lives had prepared them, and they were fortunate in hearing the “*Nibelung Ring*,”

and other works of Wagner. They felt that of all German cities Munich was the one in which music was most conscientiously rendered. They were surprised that so many Americans rush through that city, finding so little to enjoy. In Switzerland they passed their time in the secluded, sublime spots, thoroughly in communion with Nature.

All in all, it is impossible to conceive how Dr. Ellis could have used the last seventeen months of his life in more fitting preparation for the glories of the future. His intention upon returning home was to pursue a course of study whereby he might treat the origin of the myths of the Greek religion, especially the divinities, satyrs, fauns; their characteristics, the degradation of their attributes by after ages, and the representation of all these in art,—particularly the glyptic art. Also it was his desire to write lectures on literature; and no one knowing him questioned his ability for this work. Statuary was a newer thought and a fresher study with him; but he seemed to have an innate conception of its beauties. He had a better eye for form than

for color; therefore he inclined more to Greek art than mediæval. When abroad, Dr. Ellis wrote twenty-eight long letters for the Press of his denomination in Chicago. They were mostly from points of greatest interest in his travels, and all were marked by freshness of style and originality in treatment of the subjects. When his hurried pen left them, they were in readiness for a better book than most of the best volumes published from foreign travellers. One at all appreciative of his pleasures and studies could not fail to be amazed that he wrote so much and so charmingly; while those of his friends who were favored with personal letters, received rare manifestations of his delicate style, the exquisite graces of which were attractively embellished and sweetened by his direct touch. "These are splendid opportunities for rich progress," he wrote, "and most delightful social life." He was finding himself at every step; the spell to get and to give was on him! Was his spirit already loosening "from its earthly moorings"? Surely his sight was receiving its last anointings below

for the mount of God and the galleries of eternity.

Returning to their native country, Dr. and Mrs. Ellis landed in New York on the 14th of December, 1885. That evening he was a guest of the Universalist Club of the Metropolis. "He did not plan to speak; but being called upon, he rose and gave such graceful speech as only he could give, on the divine use of beauty in spiritual growth." They reached Chicago on the 18th. They attended church at St. Paul's, and were on all sides most warmly welcomed home. They visited relatives of Mrs. Ellis in the country, and they arranged for a temporary residence in the city,—intending to build a home the coming summer. On the 14th of January, 1886, he promised to preach in one of the suburbs, "all for love," the following Sunday. On Friday, the 15th, he wrote to Edwin Ellis. Very nearly or quite up to that time, he seemed in perfect health. But he had preached his last sermon eighteen months before, and he never wrote again. That last letter to a very dear brother was singularly communicative and tender, and

near its close he wrote: "I am now reading a pile of books I got in Paris and London, and am having a leisure for reading I never had before. I hope something will come of the opportunity in due time; yet the seed I am sowing may all die in the ground." Before Sunday he was too sick to leave his room, and the disease soon developed into deadly typhoid pneumonia. At times he suffered intensely; at others he seemed free from pain; and so far as possible, he made full arrangements for his funeral and burial services. "When he was looking on the light of the last Sunday morning he ever beheld on earth, sick and suffering though he was, he found strength to exclaim, 'What a beautiful tint there is in the air!'" and when he was told he was going, he said, "So soon!" He drew his final breath a little before noon, on Tuesday, the 26th. The greater the soul, the greater the idea of immortality. The last twelve days of his life were the grandest. He fully exemplified his Christian faith, proved his belief in immortality by his desire to live if possible,—for he had much to live

for; if not, it would be just as well: no anxiety, it would be life, whether here or there. His death was beautiful, like his life,—no frown, no pang; simply the breathing of his spirit out into the kingdom of perfect light and beauty, ever-growing love and life. His belief in immortality has helped many; his manner of dying made those who saw him and were nearest and dearest to him feel they too could die triumphantly.

The words uttered at memorial and funeral services that were reported, and the tributes which were printed within three weeks after Dr. Ellis's life ebbed away to the eternal abodes, are more than the writer's in this memorial. The day after his departure, the Sabbath-School Union of Boston and vicinity, of which he had been an officer and active member, was in session at the Shawmut Church. The evening of Wednesday, the 27th of January, the services were wholly memorial for him. Familiar hymns were sung; the Rev. R. T. Polk led the prayers; a comprehensive and appropriate resolution was adopted; and addresses were made by lay-

men, Messrs. Charles Caverly and J. D. W. Joy, and by the Rev. Drs. C. W. Biddle, G. L. Demarest, and G. H. Emerson,—all tender words of former parishioners and personal friends, and highly appreciative. The next day deeply impressive funeral services were held in St. Paul's Church, Chicago. The choir rendered helpful music; the Rev. J. C. Adams and the Rev. Dr. W. H. Ryder read and prayed, and both made very fitting addresses, between which an extract from a thoughtful and affectionate letter from the Rev. Dr. H. W. Thomas was read. Saturday, the 30th, a thousand miles from those scenes, services were rendered at Athol, Massachusetts, in the home of Edwin Ellis, by the choir of the Athol Congregationalist Church and the pastor, the Rev. Mr. Stebbins, by the Rev. Messrs. C. R. Moor and G. L. Perin, and President E. H. Capen, D. D.,—all full of love and trust. The burial was late that afternoon, in the cemetery at North Orange, where reposes the dust of Dr. Ellis's parents and of many other relatives, and where years ago he prepared a lot, placed a monument, and buried

the form of the wife of his youth. On the following Monday, at the Boston Ministers' Meeting, a minute of true analysis and commendation was adopted, and remarks were made by the Rev. Messrs. Bush, Gardiner, Harman, Hill, Moor, Skinner, Smith, Start, Whitney, and by the Rev. Drs. Capen, Flanders, and Miner. Then followed editorial tributes from the Rev. I. J. Mead and from the Rev. Drs. Emerson, Cantwell, Atwood, Gunnison, and Mrs. J. L. Patterson, with contributions from the Rev. Drs. Lee and O. F. Safford, and others. Many preachers have drawn lessons from his life in their sermons; and the Rev. A. J. Patterson, D.D., is known to have devoted much of a discourse to his characteristics. The author of this memorial has wished to place with it some further words of others concerning our friend; but it is difficult to select from so much, where all is so good. He considers those on the following pages a fitting close.

TRIBUTES OF FRIENDS.

FROM the many expressions of respect and esteem at the memorial service of the Sabbath-School Union in Boston we make the following selections.

Mr. CAVERLY said : —

“Never was there a purer, a more unselfish, a more conscientious minister. The young people were devoted to him, and he led them in the right way, and under his influence they became workers in the church. We all loved him.”

Mr. JOY remarked : —

“Others may speak of his literary abilities, which were very marked, of his methods as an earnest student, and of his varied accomplishments ; but I prefer to talk of him as my chosen friend and companion, as the Christian gentleman whom we may delight to emulate, as a loyal member of our church wherever and under whatever circumstances he lived ; and we may point with great satisfaction to his life as an illustration of what Universalist Christianity will make of the earnest and sincere man.”

Dr. BIDDLE spoke thus: —

“He possessed a rare ability to draw out and use the talents of the people in different departments of Christian work. More recent years confirmed my acquaintance with Dr. Ellis, as he had been for a considerable time a resident of Cambridge and an inmate in one of the families of my parish. It was in that home that he prepared the Life of Dr. Chapin. During that time he was sometimes heard in the North Cambridge pulpit, and often took part in the social praise meetings. His fine literary style, his apt illustrations, his philosophical frame of mind, his deep intellectual and spiritual insight were much admired and enjoyed. His greatness of heart and mind drew about him persons of refinement and intelligence.”

Dr. DEMAREST said: —

“His example may properly be commended not only to other clergymen, but also to the laymen of our church. Previous speakers have referred to the attachment of young people to Dr. Ellis. Such attachments are an important factor in the future of the Universalist Church. Every minister needs to attract that element; and his real success may be measured by the strength of youthful attachment,— an attachment which shall not be merely

personal, but shall extend through the minister to the Church itself."

Dr. EMERSON remarked: —

"It was needless to say that he knew him as a Christian gentleman without a flaw in his character. If ever man was made of glass, it was he ; he could be seen in every motive of his soul and deed. His character transparent, was obvious at sight ; it never had a blot. He was a man of the higher intellect, — he had intuition, the spiritual insight. He was a delightful companion. It was a happiness to walk with him upon the street, by the seashore, upon hills, and in the woods. Dr. Ellis has made very substantial and durable contributions to the literature, the strength, and the prestige of our general Church. He is entitled to his monument ; that monument is his praise in all our churches."

From the many utterances at the funeral in Chicago, we take these.

Mr. ADAMS said: —

"His was one of those fine and noble natures, born of the Holy Spirit, whose preparations are always made, and whose record must ever be full of honor and of blessing, whenever he should go. And dear as life was to him, with the ever-freshening ambitions which he entertained, and the new projects he was meditating, I can have no manner

of doubt that on the other side there are labors inviting his hands, and new studies ready for his eager mind.

"I find myself drawn inevitably to the terms of eulogy in speaking of this man. He was one of whom the words of praise came naturally and instinctively. His pure spirit shone in his face. His Christian faith spoke itself in all his words. His Christian insight made him see the bright, and the hopeful, and the beautiful side of life. His exquisite refinement governed every thought and every sense. Who of us will ever forget the words he spoke to us in our little meeting a few weeks ago, and all the broad catholicity there was in it, the charity for men's opinions, the unswerving trust in the final conquest of the truth. It was a delight and a blessing to listen to him. For his words came out of his life, and his life came out of his soul, and his soul was always true to the spirit of his Master. The spirit of his life might be put in the phrase with which he christened one of the children of his pen, 'At Our Best.' In all he did, in every contact with his fellows, he strove to be at his best."

Dr. RYDER is reported to have closed his address with these words: —

"The speaker then asked if among those who had heard the deceased preach so often, there was

not an appeal for right living and consecration ; if they did not hear a voice saying, ‘ What you do, do quickly.’ Did not all have something to learn ? Were there not some young people present upon whom he had urged consecration and usefulness, who could now declare, ‘ As for me, I pledge myself to loyalty in the service of my Master, and put away the follies of life ! ’ Out of that casket came that appeal, as it came urgently from the lips of a man who tried to live the life of a Christian gentleman.”

Dr. THOMAS, unable to accept an invitation to be present at these services, sent a letter, from which Mr. ADAMS read the following extract : —

“ There are no words of appreciation, of sympathy, of hope, that I would not gladly utter at the last rites of one whom I have known so well as a brother in the ministry, and loved so dearly as a devoted friend. For years we were together in study, in work, in sorrow, and in joy. I never knew a better man. There was not a flaw nor speck in his noble and transparent soul.

“ Gentle, unobtrusive, kind, and helpful, he was loved by all. His fine culture, deep piety, and great and generous love for man as man, and his unwavering faith in God and the final triumph of good over evil, made his ministry and his life a

blessing to any church or community. His unexpected death, when as yet in the fulness of his power as a writer and a preacher, is a great loss not only to the Universalist Church, but to our city and to the common cause of religion.

“We must believe that the universal is necessary, and the necessary right. Death is universal ; hence it is necessary, and therefore it cannot be wrong. It is race-destiny ; it is God’s appointment ; it is a release from pain, a birth into a higher life. Believing this, we will think of our dear brother and friend, not as dead, but alive,—absent from us, but present with the Lord. Oh ! how often have we talked and thought and sung of the land that is better, of the many mansions in Our Father’s house, of the home to which he has gone,—the home where we shall meet again !”

These are words from some of the other tributes ; Dr. GUNNISON wrote : —

“He was the most gentlemanly of men, and in the hour of largest forgetfulness he was never coarse, for there was no coarseness in him. He had great capacity for friendship, and loved his friends with a passionate idolatry. In all our walks together, he never spoke ill of any, but seemed to have the largest charity for the frailties of men. He used to talk to us of his friend Dr. Thomas, of

Chicago, and prized most highly his friendship with him, and he desired that we should know him ; so did he believe that we should love the friend he loved. He was not old, by any means, and yet he had an old man's love of the friends of boyhood. He used often to tell of the old woods of his early home, the sports he had, and the friends that he enjoyed ; and though each day brought new acquaintances, he kept remembrance of the old, and loved to tell of those who all the way back to his earliest ministry had sat beneath his teaching."

Dr. PATTERSON said : —

" Dr. Ellis was a welcome preacher in all our pulpits East and West. Few preachers were more widely known or more tenderly beloved. Whether carrying the cares of a large church or enjoying an interval of respite from pastoral duties, he was always the diligent, painstaking student. His style as a writer was peculiarly original, chaste, and refined ; but its spiritual insight is its special charm. I remember well the first article, or rather sermon, which I ever saw from his pen. It was on ' Spiritual Discernment.' He made the truth as clear as sunlight, that we see more with the mental than with the physical vision, more with the spiritual than with the intellectual. He was through life a fitting illustration of his theme. He knew Nature, God, man,

duty, immortality, through the senses less than by the soul. He lived as seeing him who is invisible ; and he grew year by year, in person, in culture, in character, more refined, more charming, more rounded and perfected, as a disciple of Christ and a son of God."

Dr. CANTWELL wrote : —

"He was a true Knight of the Cross, bearing ever 'the white banner of a blameless life.' He was everywhere recognized as a man utterly removed by nature from all that was ignoble or unworthy. His refinement shone on his face, was seen in his clear-cut features, and heard in the very tones of his voice. We remember how loyal and steadfast Dr. Ellis has been in the service of our Church ; how he has honored his calling as a minister, serving the Church with the preacher's ripe and cultivated gifts and the pastor's earnest fidelity. On every occasion when his help was needed for denominational work, it was cheerfully forthcoming. By his pen he has enriched our Press and added honor to our literature. He brought to the work of the ministry noble aims and purposes. Many of our younger men have caught inspiration from his example, and been strengthened in their efforts for a better culture through his instrumentality. The life of our Church is deeper and richer in all

vital departments of our work, now that this man has lived and labored and passed on to his eternal rest. The affectionate esteem in which the Church will cherish his memory will be evidence in coming years of what he has done for it."

This is Dr. ATWOOD'S paragraph: —

"With surprise and sharp pain we learn of the sudden death of our greatly esteemed brother, Dr. Sumner Ellis. Apart from the sense of personal loss, we deplore his departure as a bereavement of our whole Church. A rare and delicate spirit, with a physical and intellectual organism nicely adjusted to its fine intuitions, — eye and voice and hand telling at once the story of the gentle and susceptible soul behind; quickly responsive to all the melody, beauty, truth around, yet just enough distrustful of himself to hold him back from full enthusiasm; critical, choice in his tastes, a Greek in his intellectual sympathies, but a modern and an American in the breadth of his moral affections; useful as a minister, admired as a literary artist, beloved as an unspotted and amiable man, yet, because his sensibilities were so keen and his ideals so high, never satisfied with himself, — such was Sumner Ellis; one of the best exponents our Church has had of the happy union of culture and faith."

And this is the substance of the "minute" prepared by President CAPEN and adopted by the Ministers' Meeting of Boston: —

"This meeting would make record of its sense of loss in the death at Chicago, Illinois, on January 26, of Sumner Ellis, D.D. Dr. Ellis was born in Massachusetts, and the greater part of his ministerial work was done within the limits of this Commonwealth, though he had held successful pastorates in the West. His whole life was a contribution to the cause in which he labored. Beginning with limited advantages for an education, he made such diligent use of the opportunities afforded him that he very early won a reputation for careful, painstaking, methodical, and scholarly habits, of thinking and working. The fruit of these habits, early acquired and persistently cultivated to the end of his life, was apparent throughout his ministerial career. As a writer he was characterized by good taste and sound judgment in the selection and arrangement of his materials, by clearness of statement and by force and frequently beauty of expression, by the freshness and vigor of his thought, and by sincerity and earnestness of purpose. The order of his mind was not theological, but philosophical, ethical, and practical. In his pulpit efforts, therefore, he appeared to be the teacher, the counsellor, the wise friend, rather than the pulpit orator. He was modest,

simple, unaffected, genial, and buoyant in his temperament, and all the movements of his mind were guided by a clear, strong, cheerful, and courageous faith. These qualities not only made his personality unique, but drew men to him with irresistible force. His friendships were warm and lasting, and his influence, especially upon young men, was wholesome and durable. Few men in the Universalist ministry could leave behind a wider circle of those who would feel a personal bereavement in their death. Our brother did an important and a noble work, the memorials of which will remain when all of us are dust."



I.

THE UNIVERSAL INTUITION.



FAITH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

I.

The Universal Intuition.

As seeing Him who is invisible. — HEBREWS xi 27.

THERE are two paths leading from man to his Maker. These are Logic and Intuition; or, as they are sometimes called, Reasoning and Feeling. Along the first the intellect moves; along the second the heart makes its shorter and more direct journey. The first is the way of argument, and builds on the premise of a manifest intelligence and love in Nature,—the great conclusion that there is a power above us and around us, which we rightly name Deity. The second is the way of experience, along which it is claimed that the sense of the divine is an actual finding of a Deity, an

immediate spiritual discernment, more or less distinct, of the Light within the light.

It is of this path of experience, or intuition, that I shall speak at the present time, hoping to show that it leads, not through a realm of fiction, where things are not what they seem, but rather amid a scenery as real as land and water present to the outward eye. I hope to make it appear that this universal sense of God, which we call an intuition, is a fit foundation on which to erect the temple of Faith, within whose sacred walls we all would dwell from day to day, and find needed shelter in the dark hours of life.

Let us seek first a clear understanding of this term *intuition*. Already I have used the "sense of the divine," as its synonym. Webster defines it as "a direct apprehension or cognition; an act of immediate knowledge." Coleridge calls it "a direct beholding;" and Cousin, the French philosopher, in full accord with both, says, "My intuition is my looking upon reality." As methods of proof, logic and intuition differ as outward authority differs from experience. In the one case,

proof is formal, and in the other it is experimental. Thus the logician affirms the reality of a Divine Being because a conclusive chain of argument reaches that lofty goal; but the intuitionist affirms that there is a Deity because he has a sense of his presence, and is conscious of inspirations derived from him. The former believes since he confides, as well he may, in logic, for logic marching steadily from premise to conclusion is indeed majestic, and worthy of reverence and trust; but the latter believes since he confides in his experience. In some happy hour he has felt the impress of a Divinity; in some darker moment a light has shone upon him; in some great silence his inner listening has heard a voice not of earth. Like Enoch, he has now and then, along some rare eminence, walked with God as in a sacred companionship; like Job, he has held high converse with him; or like Jesus, he has realized a oneness of spirit with spirit. And by reason of this intuition, Belief has come to take up her abode with him and cheer him on his way, putting a song in his heart, a moral courage in his career, and light-

ing his path through this life and beyond with the radiance of a great hope. Thus from the stem of Feeling, Faith blooms and bears her gracious fruits. As an antidote to scepticism, Tennyson tells us how befriending is this sense of the Deity,—

“ If e'er, when Faith had fallen asleep,
I heard a voice, ‘ Believe no more,’
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

“ A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason’s colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answered, ‘ I have felt.’ ”

Because he had *felt*, therefore he paused at the thought of atheism. He could not discredit the witness of his soul, that seemed at times to meet and greet a spirit in Nature and in life, and to hold a high communion. In all beauty he had discovered a hidden Artist. In his sorrow he had known a higher sympathy. In his aspirations he had received the aid of an Inspirer, and an Approver of his nobler deeds was ever near. And on this experience he rested his heart in the sweet trust that

there is a God, and that there is a care and guidance, and a "far-off, divine event, to which the whole creation moves."

On a similar ground have countless souls besides the English laureate reared the fair temple of Faith. Alike have poets and saints trusted in their vivid sense of the divine as something that pointed to a reality. In that great Wesleyan movement, a mighty wave of spiritual awakening, there was realized a wide arrest of doubt, and a broad reign of faith. While Bishop Butler opened the logical path to Deity, Wesley invited his pilgrims to enter the experimental one; and thus at once shortened the search and rendered it more successful. In feeling he recognized the natural prelude to believing. In like manner did George Fox seek to lead his disciples into the radiance of an inner quickening and illumination, wherein the face and favor of a present Deity would shine forth; and sitting in that revealing light, the Friends have been noted as much for the absence of scepticism and the joy of a real faith, as for their virtue and humanity. To them belief has been as natural

as a song to the attuned heart of a bird. Of their spiritual experience a trust and peace have sprung, which their own poets have set in well-known hymns.

But in all the ages it has been, not the sway of logic, but the sense of the soul, the spiritual feeling, that has set the masses in the attitude of confidence towards the unseen world. Intuition has been not only the Tennysonian and Wesleyan prelude to believing, but even the entire human music of faith has thus its first note in the deeper realm of experience; and so in China and India and Egypt and Greece and Rome and England and America the altars of religion have been mostly set up in the name of an inner perception of a spiritual environment. The rude Indian has seen God in the cloud or heard him in the wind, has caught his smile in the summer sunshine or met his frown in the passing shadow, and paused to pay him some form of worship. But the soul of a Plato or Thomas à Kempis or Channing has only been cognizant of a higher range of spiritual lights, and felt more sensibly the impress of a Universal

Spirit; and so in the common name of experience — common to barbarian and civilized — these greater souls say their prayers and chant their psalms to the Great Unseen.

And now we pass to the most important part of our discussion; namely, an inquiry into the value of this intuition as an evidence of the spiritual environment to which it points. In other words, is there sufficient ground for putting our trust in it as the witness of a great fact; namely, a Divinity in Nature and in the sphere of human life? Is this spiritual sense a mirror that reflects nothing, projecting out of itself its own images, or does it reveal an actual spiritual scenery? Is there a God *because* we *feel* his spirit in communion with ours; or is the feeling all there is in the matter, and beyond us lies the great void and the eternal silence, with only our phantasy projected into it? To this inquiry let us now address ourselves.

Man shares three orders of perceptions. The first order are sense-perceptions, taking cognizance of matter and its phenomena. Man sees an outward world. He sees the earth at his feet and the cloud overhead, and

his vision stretches out to the stars. He sees the properties of bodies,—length, breadth, and thickness,—and their many conformations and colors. He sees the plant and the tree, the bird, the animal, and the members of his own race. He hears sounds. He detects fragrance, and he also discovers flavors. These are called “sense-perceptions.”

The second order are mind-perceptions, taking cognizance of ideas, truths, and principles. Man recognizes a realm of intellections, in which are included simple ideas and complex ideas, or ideas in their relations. He sees the elements of numbers, and the principles of morals. He looks upon the verities of philosophy, and the abstractions of metaphysics. These are called “mind-perceptions.”

The third order are soul-perceptions, taking cognizance of God and a spiritual sphere. Of these I have already spoken at length; and now I set the three orders together, since I desire to show that the analogies between them as to their origin and scope are such as to confer on them an equal validity as evidence of the reality of the objects to which

they point. In the consciousness of man the sense-perceptions and the mind-perceptions and the soul-perceptions assume a common rank as elements of experience. Equally certain are we that we share them all. Together they file through the inner life, appearing as common factors of our being. Now the senses may be busy in their office; and now the mind is active in its sphere; and now the soul comes to the front, and adores and loves and answers back to the celestial appeals: and what I claim is that, accepting the first and second of these orders of perceptions as revelations of their respective objects, we have no good reason for rejecting the third as not being a faithful witness. Hence the proof of an outward world, and of a realm of ideas, and of a Deity, rests on much the same ground; namely, the common veracity of our three orders of perceptions. If two parts of our being are trustworthy, we need not distrust the third and crowning portion, that perceives a spiritual Presence, and knows a Life that is in all that the senses perceive and the mind contemplates. Man is not such

a contradiction that two orders of his perceptions are habitually truthful, and a third order is universally false, though it be of transcendent significance. His nature is better balanced and more homogeneous ; and hence while we confess there is the world of matter which he perceives, and the sphere of truth and philosophy on which he gazes, let us follow with all confidence his spiritual footsteps that lead us to a Divinity, an immortality, and a final perfection.

But note one point more with reference to these several orders of perception. Whence come they in the consciousness of man? How can we account for their origin? They all seem alike to be caused or occasioned by external realities, and not to be self-generated. They transpire under the action of the external upon the internal. Thus the flower, or the tree, or the star, awakens the perception of a rose, or an oak, or a planet flaming in the evening sky. The mountain begets the sense of an eminence, and the vale of a depression, in the landscape. The cloud in the sky floats before the vision, and the eye pro-

ceeds to take note of the shape and color, and assigns it to one group or another of the forms that make up the cloud-realm. First is the scenery of Nature, and afterwards the perception of it. The objects produce the subjective sense of them. And thus dependent are the mind-perceptions on the reality of truths and principles; for no one will claim that it creates these. Rather, truths and principles being eternal, and in all the universe alike, the mind is awakened by their presence as the sleeper by the light of the morning sun. And we have no reason to think otherwise of the soul-perceptions, than that they are the effects of a spiritual environment resting upon the soul and moving it to response. They are not self-generated, for so at least does the analogy of the perceptions declare, and so does consciousness affirm; but rather are they caused, and their cause can be none other than a Divinity touching them by his nearness, and inspiring them by his grace.

But observe one test more of the value of the spiritual intuition as evidence of the Deity to which it points. It is a universal sense;

and every universal sense is thus far proved to be truthful in its deliverance, unless this one is an exception, which we have no reason to think. We can have no better witness than a universal sense-perception or a universal mind-perception. This is admitted on all sides. The individual sense in regard to any given object in the world of Nature may be at fault; it may be the victim of some illusion, and thus render a false report. In the eye there may be a defect, and the thing that seems is not, or is not what it seems. Thus the single vision may err. But we have a remedy, and that is the aggregate of sensations or beholdings; for these are absolutely reliable. The testimony of one to the color of the grass or the sky might well be distrusted; but when a race tells us with a marked unanimity that the grass is green and the sky blue, there is nothing more to be said: it must be so. One might mistake in his account of the form of an object, since one may be deceived; but ten pairs of eyes could hardly be confused on this question of shape, and the universal sense of mankind would be

reliable to the utmost. Hence we conclude there are the stars in the sky, not merely because our own eyes tell us so, but because the vision of humanity is in perfect accord on this matter. And in like manner are the universal mind-perceptions found to be true to the facts; or, as the common saying runs, "What everybody says, must be so." One man may err on a simple proposition in mathematics; but a second man might set him right,—a thousand men surely would do so. The judgments of the race are final because truthful. When humanity comes to a common verdict, it will never be outgrown or altered, since it will be the deliverance of a verity.

But if such credit belongs to the universal sense-perceptions and the universal mind-perceptions, then may we not confide in the universal soul-perceptions, which on the score of analogy should give us a just reflection of the truths of a spiritual realm? Of the three orders of universal perceptions, is it reasonable that two should be uniformly reliable, and the third uniformly untrustworthy? Nay, there is no reason in such a supposition. The

consistency of the universe is against it. The harmony of the great whole is against it. The integrity of human nature is against it. And hence we may well give full credit to the universal sense of a Divine Power above and around man, and which assumes to his spirit the shape of a wise and kind Providence. The wide intuition must point to a reality. The whole race does not, with one ardent consent, adore a void, nor rest its heart on a phantasy; but by its universal soul-perception it must indeed see "Him who is invisible." This intuitive recognition of a God is the most majestic and transforming sentiment of human life, and in its universality we may find its verity.

Yes, we feel the Divinity; and therefore let us confide in it, and pay court to it, and aspire to a oneness with it, and render to it our daily service. And from that altitude of life we can each one sing with the poet, —

" My willing soul would stay
In such a frame as this,
And sit and sing herself away
To everlasting bliss."

II.

THE INCARNATION A NECESSITY.



II.

The Incarnation a Necessity.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. — JOHN i. 14.

ATHEOLOGIANS have striven hard to reflect the meaning of this term, “Word.” To say that a library has been written upon the “proem,” or preface to John’s Gospel, would be to keep within the bounds of truth. Now, looking at this term, as of course I must, with my own insight, I am impelled to adopt as its closest synonym and best parallel, the word “God;” and in this I am borne out by Scripture statement, direct and indirect. “In the beginning was the Word,” says John ; and what more? “And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” And it is a plain implication, on almost every page of the New Testament, that in Jesus dwelt the Father;

that in him was “the fulness of the Godhead,” — the fulness in the sense that every attribute and disposition, every essential trait, the total elements of the Divine character, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, were given place and power in the Son of God. “The Word was God,” and “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” The highest spirit became incarnate. The Divine gathered itself up, and passed from its veilings into this human embodiment, to the end that it might be recognized among men. The Infinite Light, so vast it could not be seen, outlying the sweep of the eye, and therefore lost, was concentrated into this Star, this bright Nazarene, to be reflected upon all eyes. The Life, a sea without a shore, all centre and all circumference, all-abounding and all-including, manifold, universal, projected itself, sent itself out, worded itself, in a finite form, as a drop of water from the ocean, or from the hidden mist above your heads, would typify the universe of water.

The Word, then, is characteristically God. Jesus is the Divine Man. He is the visible

type of the Invisible Presence. He is the special set in front of the universal,—one in quality, and representative of God.

I have said the Infinite is vast, and therefore illusive. We fail to grasp it. It plays beyond our sight. A few great and generalizing minds have indeed touched it and dwelt in rapture on their vision; but to the masses it has been a far-off and vague attraction, something they could not find, something they could not cease to search for,—a hiding glory, yet luring by its enchanting mystery; a something dreamed of, but not discovered. And so there was need of the incarnation, among the great mass of mankind, to secure a first clear conception and sense of the true Godhead. Only thus would the hidden be clearly and successfully revealed.

But let me say, further, that the incarnation is not only a primal, but a continual need with us. We need a daily recurrence to it, that its showing of the Father may not fade and vanish. Otherwise we should lose the level of our conception by degrees, and lapse toward the pre-Christian vagueness. Our

memory cannot be trusted, especially to keep and carry intact and impressive so subtle a view as that of the Deity which we may catch in some happy mood of life. There is danger of our best vision dissolving and floating off into nonentity, as the tinted cloud vanishes even while you gaze.

I have a friend who tells me how impossible it is to retain in his eye a material form with accuracy and permanence. He is a carver in wood, for the ornamentation of fine furniture. He is a genius in his sphere. His cutting of a bird, a buck's head, a lamb, seems to give it everything but life. His carved flowers mimic nature to a marvellous extent. But he never works without his model before him, to keep him up to his level, even though he repeat the same device to a hundredth time. In the absence of his symbol or his type, he finds he gradually loses ground,—here a line, and there a curve, and elsewhere a rounding; a depression rises, a prominence lowers; and little by little the eye yields to an evil influence, so that his fiftieth piece would be a caricature

of his first. But if a rare eye is unequal to the holding with security a view of the finite and outward, what may we not expect will become of the vast and subtle visions of the Infinite, flashed out upon our elevations of soul, had we not some embodied likeness and abiding symbol? What ideals would fade, and refuse to be recalled! What open prospects — granted once, as on some mountain the clouds part and give you an instant outlook, and then close — would shut in, and stay shut in! What lost conceptions should we have to sigh over, — as many of us have sighed at the lost face we knew and loved in our earliest childhood! How would our God become a dim and hazy memory, a faded picture no art could recover, a vanished face from before the soul!

In short, it is the office of the incarnation to supplement and complete the revelations of Nature. A life can be best reflected in a life. God can be most adequately and fully expressed in a character, — and, indeed, I see not how he could type and show forth his personal and manifold spirit in any other way.

Matter is too set and clumsy, too formal and cold, too dead and expressionless, even at its best, to portray the divine in all its depths of thought, and tenderness of soul, and personality of relations. It takes spirit thus to mirror spirit. It demands character to show forth character.

Take, for instance, the condescension of God, seeking you out in your obscurity, and waiting upon your soul in the spirit of a guest and friend, coming at your poor and stammered entreaty, placing his arm under you in your need, answering your lowly cry of sorrow or remorse,—this is not the lesson of Nature as that volume is usually read. The most palpable impression of the outward universe is that of *power*. My first notion of Deity — and in this I think I was not singular — was of an impersonal omnipotence. God seemed to me the mighty power that terrified rather than warmed my heart. I saw Him — or It — in the swaying ocean, the uplifted hills, the sweep of the wind and the tramp of the storm; in the depths of space, with its wheeling systems and its fearful suns. I stood

on the old farm as a minute speck against a universe of cold granite. I saw no mild face in the heavens; I felt no sympathy in the earth. I rambled over the hills alone, with no hidden heart beating against mine, no gentle voice of love whispering to me, no friend attending my steps. The world did not seem godless, but it did not seem full of a tender and companionable presence. And never shall I forget when the lesson of the incarnation in Christ came home to me, in connection with the words, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." "Ah!" said I, "is this so? Shall I set that lowly and loving spirit in this vast world around me? Shall I transfer that New Testament character, more gracious than a mother's, above these hills, into the night's darkness, and into the dizzy spaces?" Yea, even so I did; and lo! the old world vanished like a dark scroll, and a new earth and a new heaven stood before me, wherein were the dear affections and influences that were better than life.

The religion of Nature has been a religion of fear; always a religion of fear,—a re-

ligion of awful sacrifices to gain the eye and ear of the stern Arbiter of events. Its devotees have been filled with boding and trembling, as not having found the love that tempers the divine power and that concentrates with a personal interest upon every child of the race. In the stooping of Jesus to the child and the outcast and the sorrowing; in the benignity of the Saviour; in the graciousness of the Lord and Redeemer, overlooking none, accessible to all, yearning to meet and greet all, inviting the lowest and worst to come to him and share his company and helping ministrations,—in all this we learn first and best to know him who is the soul of all things, and infinitely great because infinitely condescending.

We need not stand afar off, we need not draw nigh in fear; for the universe veils an inviting face. The brooding Presence, everywhere like that that dwelt in Judæa, will exclude none. The appeal is to woe and want, not less than to joy and affluence. The beggar is as privileged as the prince; the peasant in his cot as the lord in his palace; the sinner

as the saint; the little lisping child, white-robed for its night's sleep, as the mature man or woman. No one needs to go in fear. Said a clergyman to me once, "I offer prayer to Jesus, since I am unworthy to approach the Most High." But, said I, "My Deity is reflected in and through Jesus, and both alike would give me ear and favor." The Infinite bends down to the finite, as the mother to the babe. The Holy Spirit waits in the depths,—waits on us continually. He that sits on the planets stands by every toiler's side in the dusty shop and on the farm. He forbids none to come unto him. His gates are never closed. Nay, he hastens forth to meet every comer, and gives him a gracious welcome.

Take, again, the moral purpose of God to bring the race to a perfect obedience. Nature does not show it. Nature does not reveal the Father's intent of discipline, to the end that every child of his shall be "thoroughly furnished unto good works." Nature is bountiful towards our temporal wants,—gives us seeds and seasons, food and fuel, ample material for clothing, soft fleeces and growing fibres to be

woven into needful fabrics, commodities for commerce and wealth, quarries and forests for warehouses and homes. Nay, more, Nature supplies amply our æsthetic want. She scatters beauty with a free hand. Her curves and colors are endless. She arches the sky, instead of making it flat and unlovely. The trees are flexible and swaying, instead of rigid, and now and then burst into the very profusion of bloom. The waters ripple and flow. The birds bring a thousand tints to our eyes, and notes to our ears. The very rocks are fringed with mosses, and the dark soil she hastens to hide beneath her beautiful carpet of green. The sunset has a charm to stay the most stolid, and check the child in its sports. It is clear enough that the Genius of the world regards the fine sense of the eye and ear. Nay, more: the intellect is tasked and tempted into activity by these outward conditions, by the laws and processes of Nature. But the moral code is not written there; morality is not urged on the face of the land, nor across the dome of the sky. The winds are silent concerning the virtues, the waters

murmur not of duty, the Golden Rule is not found among the secrets of the visible world.

Now, I am not going to impeach Nature, not even to turn critic on her. She is right in her sphere; but her sphere, as we must affirm, is a lower one. Matter is the base of the world, and not its crown. The material falters on the margin of the spiritual, and its stammer ends in a silence. The dust is mute concerning the highest things. The commandments are unspeakable by the rigid lips of matter, as there is no machine so delicate in its touch as the living finger. The earthly cannot contain and reflect the heavenly, since there is no adequate unity. Nature is but a broken mirror of God in all his perfections and his high moral purpose towards man. It never says, "Be ye holy," "Do as you would be done by," "Love your enemies," "Go after the lost to save them, as the shepherd follows his wandering lambs to the wilderness," "Commiserate sorrow," "Lift up and cheer the burdened heart," "Be godlike." The ten thousand shapes and colors of matter, beauti-

ful, indeed, and useful, as filling a place in the development of the universe, afford but shadowy messages of the final state of man as God foresees and ordains it.

And so the “Word” must be made flesh and dwell among us. The True Light must have its typical star. The Spirit must choose a spirit through which to show its nature and speak its desires. The Christ is the only true symbol and messenger of the Divine character and will and purpose. And I scarcely need remind you how he plead from the cradle to the cross, with his daily life and his never silent lips, the cause of holiness. To him, sin was the great evil, virtue the great good. That was the synonym of death; this, of life. That was the destroyer that chased down and tore its victims; this, the angel that healed and blessed. That was the whirlwind that left desolation in its track; this, the June zephyr that carried freshness and joy on its way. That leads to infamy; this, to a real fame. That cast down to hell; this, as with a chariot of glory, bore the soul up to heaven!

Again, and in conclusion, note how touchingly the love of God is shown through this "Word" that was made flesh and dwelt among us. I have only time to sketch a picture or two in illustration of the thought.

You will remember that on one occasion there drew near to Jesus a leper,—a man on fire and consuming with a fearful malady, an outcast by Jewish law, one whom none could touch without defilement and the need of after-purification, the terror of childhood, the dread of maturity, the loathing of all. From such, the most wretched of mortals, sympathy had been withdrawn, and aid revoked. The leper must live in solitude, and die alone. So far as possible, he was forgotten. But such a one drew near to the Son of God; and what do you behold? Did he cry, "Unclean, away?" Nay. Jesus laid his hand on him and *touched* him,—the supreme act of tenderness in such a case, where not even his mother would have touched him, nor his father approached his presence. No soft and friendly hand had he felt in all those sick and dreary days and months. But Jesus touched

him! Oh, never had leper such a touch before! And that was God making visible and real to man his own condescending and blessing love.

Take another picture. Christ stopped to caress and take to his bosom the little children that gambolled in his pathway. The disciples murmured. The children were beneath their notice; men and women were of account, as being convertible and wielding an influence. They were material for the active army, fit to bear banners and swords. They told for the strength of the cause. But the children were of no avail, were counted out as ciphers. But Jesus—and the Heavenly Father through him—clasped his arms around their sweet weakness and innocence, and breathed out a blessing upon them, in the immortal words: “Of such is the kingdom of heaven.” This was an act that has exalted every child in the eyes of its mother and the world, and has exalted God by showing that he sends down his affections to the very cradle, and girds such as know him not, and gives the weakest a place in his love. Such is God.

But look again. The cross stands on Calvary, in front of the divine love for men. This cross stands before an infinite love, and draws us to the real heart of the universe. Jesus goes to it from the highest prompting. He is in league with the eternal Love, and dies to express a divine compassion and purpose to save the world. The sacrifice is from the Father through his Son. It is the Father pleading with his children that they may come to him without fear and in love and obedience. The blood of the Cross has a celestial warmth in it; it is the reflection of the divine heart. The ruby stream has its outflow from God, and floats heavenly tidings of good-will to the race.

I have thus spoken of the Mediator and his mediation to stir your hearts to seek the Infinite Word, who will be to you wisdom and inspiration, and power and peace, and everlasting incentive to virtue and charity. In God is your life and your final inheritance. These bodies will soon return to the dust, the earth will slide from beneath us like a passing dream, the mortal will vanish like a

scroll from our vision ; and then we shall call to the Spirit. But let us not do so as strangers, since through Christ we are invited to enter into the love and service of God.

Remember that where Jesus condescended, the Most High condescends ; where the Son commanded virtue, the Father commands it ; where the Saviour showed compassion, the Father shows it. I only lift the mirror up to your eyes, and ask you to see the face therein reflected, and to carry the picture with you from day to day, even into the radiant presence of your joys and amid the darkness of your sorrows.

“ The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” The spirit of the universe lives before us in this brightness of the glory and image of the Person ; and through the Christ, let us come into the presence and service of him whose service is perfect freedom ! Let the symbol commend to us the glory that is symbolized !

“ So to our mortal eyes, subdued,
Flesh-veiled, but not concealed,
We know in Christ the Fatherhood
And heart of God revealed.”

III.

THE CHRIST CONSCIOUSNESS.



III.

The Christ Consciousness.

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. — JOHN i. 17.

INVITE you to a consideration of the consciousness of Christ as a witness of the reality of a spiritual universe; namely, of God, the soul, and immortality. In the circle of evidences we may wisely study this special segment,— the value of the perceptions, or consciousness, or spiritual knowledge, as we may term it, of this one being whom we call the Christ.

This word “consciousness” may be used in two senses. Its primal meaning is a knowledge of self,— of one’s own existence, and the internal states of that existence. This is immediate and absolute knowledge. There can be no mistake here. I know that I am a living being; that I share thoughts and feelings,

I also know. My own reality is no problem; and I know equally well that I experience those states of being called pleasure and pain, hope and fear, love and hate, joy and sorrow, ambition and depression, pride and humility, meditation and devotion. Of so much I am sure with a certainty that has not and cannot have the shadow of a doubt attending it. So long as I am rational, I cannot regard myself as a myth or phantasy; nor can I deem the succession of vital states in me, painful or pleasant, innocent or guilty, sensuous or spiritual, as anything but real and vital states. To this extent the report of consciousness is actual knowledge. In other words, we know that we exist, and that this train of experiences actually flows through our being. To doubt here is the acme of absurdity.

But "consciousness" as a term in our language has a secondary use, and that is with reference to what is beyond us. We seem to know an outward world of objects and principles, of things and beings, of entities and essences, of laws and forces. As we know self, so we seem to know a not-self; that is, a universe

around us and above us, which stands in relation to us. We seem to know land, water, and clouds. We seem to know human beings and something of their circumstances,—the homes they live in, the art and architecture with which they have adorned their houses, the trades they follow, the laws they have made, and how well or ill they keep them, the theories they entertain, the literature they have written, the music they have composed, and the many sentiments they have shared. We seem also to know many hidden phenomena as existing in this objective universe. We have not seen heat, but we affirm its reality; nor have we seen cold, but when we stand in the northern blast of the winter, or walk on the snow that is under our feet, we have no doubt on this point. We have not seen the vital principle of a seed,—a kernel of corn or an acorn; but we believe the seed that is healthily developed, and has not been kept too long, carries in it a life that may escape into a germ, and then pass into a stalk or tree. We have not seen electricity; but we think this subtle presence lurks in all the earth and the

air, and is ready to illumine our paths, bear our messages, or act as medicine on our frail bodies. We have not seen ethics, but we accept morals as among the highest realities; nor have we with our outward eye beheld the essences and entities which we denominate spiritual, but we seem to be conscious of these supreme factors of the universe we live in. We seem to recognize a spirit in man and in nature through the action of our inner faculties, and to feel the touch of an eternal realm.

Thus, the first office of consciousness is to take note of self and its experiences,—and to this extent it cannot mistake, since we know beyond a peradventure that we are living beings, and that we share such and such thoughts and feelings; while its secondary office is to apprehend, and, so far as possible, comprehend, the not-self,—the world beyond us, but which sustains manifold relations to us. Here, however, its deliverances are not entitled to the same degree of confidence. We do not know the not-self—the vast outer realm of realities and relations—as we know the little domain of our inner life with its

passing moods and fixed states. In the latter we are at home ; but in the great beyond we are very much of pilgrims and strangers. There our knowledge is progressive and slow and often at fault, or out of harmony with the facts. The growing book of our consciousness or accepted wisdom needs many revisions. An infinite height and fulness is the universe we live in ; but man is a humble beginner in his studies of it, starting from the lowest rounds on the endless ladder, and making many missteps as he ascends. Hence the accepted truths of one era are often set aside by another as pestilent heresies. Hence

“Our little systems have their day ;
They have their day, and cease to be :”

for they are but “broken lights,” or at best only scintillations from the vast orbs of truth and wisdom. As in our school-days the sums we placed on our slates or the black-board needed “proving” by some accredited mathematical process, even so do our conclusions concerning the universe, its facts, laws, and entities, need verification. How

ready are we to sit at the feet of any one who is clothed with an evident authority to speak in any given case! To a superior wisdom and insight how naturally do we submit our consciousness for confirmation, as we submit gold to the assayer's test, or some compound to the chemist's crucible. Of the great masters we would not only be pupils, seeking things new, but we also would invite them to set their seal on old acquired convictions and half-convictions and vague biases, so that we may give our faith in them the greater assurance and repose. Better than the verdict of thousands may be the witness of a single one, if the many are occupying a lower plane of observation, and the one has risen in his culture and character to a point of survey which gives him every advantage and renders him an authority. A colony of dwellers in some deep valley may not speak as wisely of the outlying regions beyond the mountains as some mountaineer who has stood on the highest peak, amid all this scenery, and scanned it with a clear and penetrating eye. Thus, while we confess there is more or less of

truth in the old maxim, *vox populi, vox Dei*, — a universal sense is trustworthy, — still do we find an especial satisfaction when the qualified ones, the geniuses, the great and noble, second the general testimony; and especially when they do so with a hearty confidence and a trumpet-like positiveness. In this way the ciphering of the masses seems to find proof; the sense of the race to be verified.

Thus unspeakable is the value of lofty minds and rare souls as witnesses to the truth of things; and we may wisely pass by the multitude, and look for the verities in these high circles, for we well know, by the record of history and by the light of common-sense, that progress and development bear the race away from the errors of the universe, and on to its truths. That is, we should not go down, but up, to seek the revelations of truth we may rely on, the voices most to be trusted, and the verdicts on which our faith may rest as on a sure foundation.

And so for a statement of facts concerning any one of the great provinces of

Nature and life which lie above us and before us, such as music, art, poetry, philosophy, jurisprudence, ethics, or religion, we rightfully go, not to a group of barbarians, not to the children in our schools, not to college boys grouped around their professors, not even to the common people, but to a select few standing at the tops of these rising columns,—nay, to the foremost spirit, if he be known, in each of these several departments. And in this way we can see how Jesus of Judæa, the Christ of the New Testament, the highest and holiest soul of the ages, may well be regarded as authority in spiritual matters; and in the great choir we may well listen first of all for his voice. For as a seer of these higher verities he has no peer. With a God and an immortality none has seemed so conversant, and of them none has been so well prepared to speak. Around him stand all the great names of earth on whom the light of faith has shone, as around some towering central peak stand the foothills and the lower summits; and assurance from him of the real-

ity of a Divine Being, a spiritual kingdom, a glorious destiny, must be regarded as a most reliable evidence,—an impressive confirmation of the intuitions of the favored few whose names adorn the religious history of the world, and a seal set upon the universal sense of mankind. Faith may well lay her case at the feet of this unequalled Judge, and confide in his renderings. Walking along the earthly pathway, we wisely heed his voice falling upon us from the midst of an upper illumination. For he bears a title to speak which clothes his words with authority greater than that of synods and councils. More significant than the combined voices of John and Paul and the great leaders of the world is the single voice of this loftiest soul. Let Milton tell us about poetry, for to him knowledge is an open secret; and for the same reason let Angelo speak of art, Beethoven inform us of the sweet and potent mysteries of music, and Blackstone unfold the domain of jurisprudence. But if we seek moral and spiritual facts, then, rising from the intimations of our

own souls and the utterances of all the saints, let us go and sit at his feet who was without guile in practice, and, so far as we know, without error in insight,—the most phenomenal life of the ages.

As proof of a Deity and a divine sphere, the humblest sensibility is valuable. Almost may we think that the matin song of the bird, greeting the sky, is the witness of an all-present love. Speaks not the happy smile of the spring of a Creator of beauty and gladness? That sense of a Divinity which, according to Robinson Crusoe, the Man Friday felt on his lonely island, and which stirs in the heart of a Hottentot and is vividly present in a peasant's soul, is indeed significant as an intimation of an objective reality, as the dim shadows in a lake hint the reality of mountain and sky and cloud. But the same sense in the cultivated means more, for it shares the confirmation which reason and progress bring to it. But in spiritual genius it has a still greater value as evidence; and in Jesus of Nazareth it rises to an unprecedented authority, since neither

in the past nor the present has he a peer as an immaculate life and a teacher of truth. Hence on his sense of a God and a soul and an immortality we may rest our faith with a double assurance. Of all the oracles, his voice may be deemed most worthy of confidence.

Once, at a feast for clergymen, the conversation took the form of a colloquy on the evidences of a spirit in Nature and a spirit in man, and of a time when these may come into a more ideal relation than is possible while the latter is moving amid these brief and overshadowed paths of earth. Each man was asked to lay his chosen word on the altar of proof; and so a happy hour was spent in making these contributions, which by their number and variety revealed how cumulative is the great argument, and conclusive when all its parts are in. One spoke of the necessary personality of intelligence and love, and how that personality seems so often to withdraw from matter, as in all high thought and worship, and to hold only an incidental

relation to it, as the kernel to its husk, and how all mental and spiritual growth is a prophecy of a final separation, in which the personality shall remain intact, and only its material garment fade away and perish. Another named the universal longing for a life above earth and time as significant, and showed us one and another great hope passing into a happy fruition. Another told us of a light that had broken through, illuminating his path in an unexpected hour, and that he had actually beheld the things of a divine sphere. Another related the dying vision of a friend. Another pointed to the empty tomb on the rocky slope of Olivet. But at last it came the turn of Robert Collyer, who proved the master-bowman of them all, and sent his arrow straight to the centre of the target. "I believe all these things are so, as our hearts would have them," said he, "because to the highest and purest spirit that the world has known, whom we call the Christ, they seemed the most real, lying in the transparent light of his consciousness as clearly as moun-

tains lie before the eye in a bright October day. On my own sense of these spiritual presences, which in my best hours is vivid and faith-fostering, I love to repose, and on the experience of a great soul I rest with a little firmer reliance; but most of all I trust and believe the report made by the One Soul that has gone the highest and lived the best of any on our planet. For I do not believe," continued he, "that by progress we rise away from the truths of our world, but rather toward them; and more than a savage or an epicure or a scientist or a *savant* or any saint must Jesus know of these divine things; and so to him I look with a sure confidence." Here Mr. Collyer rested his faith and kindled his hope, and the group of ministers was grateful for the word he had spoken.

If we seek in the Nazarene the three qualifications needful to a true witness, we shall not only find them, but find them in a supreme degree. His integrity was absolute. His gift of insight was marvellous. From the true principle he would set aside the faintest

trace of the untrue. He drew his ethics from mixed sources, but brought along not the faintest trait of a Pagan or Jewish imperfection. He set the Golden Rule in better terms than had any other. His morals and his humanities are final statements of these eminent principles; and all the ages can do is to comprehend them and apply them in every-day life. As we cannot paint the lily or adorn the rainbow, no more can we improve on the scheme of virtue and love submitted in the gospels.

And then with what infallible certainty and wonderful swiftness did he detect the most concealed motives in the hearts around him! No subtlety of the most artful Pharisee escaped his notice, and beneath the passionate and fickle ardor of a Peter he saw the hidden lineaments of a steadfast soul, which would one day burn sooner than turn. But to immaculate honor and rare insight he added the third essential of the true witness,—a special opportunity for knowledge. On the spiritual realm his clear eye was steadily fixed, and with the Unseen his converse was constant.

The solitude was vocal to his finer ear, and along the most unfrequented paths he walked not alone. He knew in whom he trusted. He was aware whence came his inspirations. In the Father he found wisdom and grace and peace as he turned to him amid the scenes of his Judæan lot; and with an eternal world, as on the Mount, he stood in open relations. Of death he spoke not, but only referred to the spent body as asleep. And hence let us accept as one of the foundations of our faith this consciousness of the diviner being which has been clothed in flesh and walked on the solid earth. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."



IV.

THE FALLACY OF DISBELIEF.



IV.

The Fallacy of Disbelief.

Be not faithless, but believing.—JOHN XX. 27.

HERE are negatives which may be entertained and advocated with the last degree of certitude; and there are other negatives that must always be held and asserted with a logical reservation, since the argument on their behalf is not complete, and in the nature of the case cannot be. That is to say, some negatives or denials are facts beyond all question, and we may stand by them as firmly as by any of the self-evident propositions. But there are others which do not come under this head, and which are always to be taken with some degree of distrust, or allowance in favor of the contrary proposition. We may deny with all the force of the logical mind, and in the strongest terms that the language

supplies, that a thing can be and not be at the same time; that the half can equal the whole, that two and two are ten, or that two parallel lines can enclose space; for these propositions contradict the possibilities of the case. But the same is not true of the affirmations that there is a God dwelling in all the vast spaces of the universe and abounding in wisdom and goodness, or that there is in man a soul that is as distinct from the body as the seed from the shell, or that beyond this little round of time, our life stretches on and on amid scenes of beauty and peace and growth.

The two sets of propositions belong to entirely distinct classes. Proof against the former is positive; but against the latter it can only be of that nature known in logic as moral or inferential or problematical. We can probe the first set of postulates to the very bottom, and show that they have not the least semblance of reality about them; we can look them through as we can a tube turned to a vast void, and see that there is no object there; we can come to the very

end of the logical process, and find there is and can be no item of truth in them. But we cannot thus deny the postulates that affirm the existence of a Divine Spirit in the world, a supermaterial life in man, and a blessed immortality; for our argument of disproof falls short of reaching an absolute conclusion. Go as far as we can, there is yet a great untraversed region to be explored, where even infinity and immortality may have their glorious seats, and the great lights of life may actually shine and shine forever, of which we seem here to catch glimpses, as in the later watches of the night the distant day throws up auroral gleams. No one can enter that realm and call it void. We have no plummet-line wherewith to sound that sea; no evidence for the assurance that it is all a shoreless realm. For aught that can be known, God may be there, and angels may be there, and the hopes of all the souls of the generations may have passed into a state of actual fruition in that "Bright Beyond."

Hence a bald atheism is not to be admitted within the province of logic, but must always

be held with a margin of reservation in favor of the opposite theory of the universe. The positive atheist goes beyond the rational limit, and his denial becomes an assumption. He can only claim that it looks to him as if there is no God, but not that there is none; because his eye is still gross and can see but a little way. What he sees is only as one to a hundred, or a thousand, or a million, when compared with what he does not see. He wades a few steps into the sea of knowledge, and then is beyond his depth, and flounders in an ocean of ignorance, not knowing with absolute certainty either what there is not, or what there is. He must still confess, on logical grounds, that there may be a Great Spirit, full of power and wisdom and love, abiding in the great arcana where his eye cannot penetrate, and thus his argument of disproof falls short. David saw this fallacy of a dogmatic atheism, and ascribed it only to the man who was devoid of a good head. It was the "fool" who could say, without some margin of reserve, "there is no God." No one has sent a sufficiently searching glance into the light

to disclose that there is no "finer light" shining there. No one can affirm there is no "spirit in the wheels" of this rushing, but safely guided chariot of worlds. No one who has full respect for the possibility of the case, and hence not a Darwin or a Huxley, dare deny that there may have been an intelligent and efficient First Cause at the remote end of the vast chain of apparently secondary causes; nor that, a divine afflatus having been imparted, it has not passed into all the beautiful and benevolent succession of unfoldings.

No man is competent to file a bold negative of this sort. Not only may the bird have had its sweet harp strung by a musical Hand, but, further, as the statues of Memnon sang only under the touch of the sunshine, so may the robin, the lark, and the nightingale pour forth their melodies into the ear of the morning or evening at the touch of a Holy Spirit. He who knows not how the grass grows, has no data on which to deny that the flower blooms at the behest of an Eye that may wander through earth and sky in quest of

beauty. He knows not what skill paints the rose and perfumes the lily, and certainly not that an Infinite Genius may not have been there to do what a Raphael or a Titian could not. No man knows that the poets have been deluded in their sense of inspirations sweeping in from above themselves, nor that the Lord may not have called to Abraham and Moses and Paul and Luther with some actual appeal from his hidden presence, and met the waiting saints of all the ages with the beaming of his face. In all the seasons of the year, and in all the strivings of humanity, there may be a God, even as the poetic and the spiritual have felt and affirmed; and the great chorus of praises and prayers, moving up from earth's generations like a vast cloud of incense or a great wave of music, may not have gone forth into a boundless void, but have found their way to an open and attentive Ear, and a Bosom not unmoved with sympathy. Hence there must ever be a reservation in the terms of atheism, since man can see so little way into the depths of the universe; or, boldly and unqualifiedly

asserting this negative, as one who claims to know, he only exposes himself to the charge of the Psalmist, that he is devoid of understanding.

And thus there may be in man a soul that is the source of all his greatness and worth and aspiration. As the pea has a pod and a kernel; as the acorn has a perishable covering that passes away with the decay of a single summer, and a central life that may be in its full vigor a thousand years hence,—so may there be in this body of ours a spirit akin to a higher order of creation and destined to live forever. The materialist must needs pause in the sweep of his negative in this direction, out of deference to the actual possibility there is in the case. Where his knowledge ends,—and that is a great way this side of the inmost chambers of his nature,—there his denial of man's spiritual rank and fellowship must cease; or beyond that he can only cast the verdict of hypothesis. It may be so and so, is all he is permitted to affirm.

When the atheistical Frenchman of the last century declared in so many words that

“Thought is a secretion of the brain, as bile is of the liver,” or when Helvetius said, without reservation, that “ideas are modifications of matter,” both of them violated the first law of logic by failing to have a premise of sufficient breadth to bear out the conclusion. They were guilty of resting an affirmation on an uncertain ground; for neither the one nor the other knew whereof he affirmed. They spoke beyond their data, since no one knows but thought may originate in spirit, and not in matter, and that ideas, loves, hopes, are the activity of a higher life, instead of the modes or conditions of material substance. The carnal eye can only compass the outward; and never yet was dissection sharp enough in its searching to detect the principle of life, or the source of our moral and spiritual or intellectual conceptions and emotions: and hence man is not competent to affirm a bold carnalism. He must bow to the sphere of mystery; he must defer to the vast unknown, and recognizing the limitation, accustom the mind to a reverence for the greatness that may sleep or wake within those

folds of secrecy. After all his denials, there may still repose at the centre of man's being a veiled divinity, as the artist sees a beautiful figure within the rough exterior of every piece of marble. As it is claimed by the fire-worshippers that there is an angel standing in the sun, hidden by the brilliant flood that pours from the shining orb, so may we claim — and there is none who bears knowledge to the contrary — that there is an angel, not born of time, but of eternity, behind every lustrous brow and glowing eye of mortals.

Socrates may have spoken the more scientific truth when, holding the hemlock in his hand, he told his enemies that though they might catch his body, they might not be able to make a captive of him. The great Athenian made a distinction between his flesh and himself; and there was no carnalist in all the classic city who could gainsay his claim set up on behalf of his soul. His real life may have been but a passing tenant of his flesh, as the young bird stays only for a season in the little circle of its nest, and then hies away on joyful wings. Homer may not have

been only a temporary organism of Grecian dust, a mass of earth, solid and fluid, rolled up and soon to be struck with dissolution, having breathed forth great songs to live through the centuries, but may have been, in addition, a gifted spirit, with all his light shining from this superior centre. The patriotic fires, from Leonidas to Lincoln, may have been kindled on no mortal altars, but on spiritual ones. The sweet humanities are not proven to have bloomed from earthly stems, but may have opened out from hearts constituted by a loving Divinity. The mother and the child, and friend and friend, may clasp in each other's arms something more than bodies of clay, even affectionate and generous natures akin to angels. Thus there is an end to materialistic logic, because there is a mysterious depth in man and in Nature into which it cannot push its earthly premise.

And no more are we competent to deny the soul's immortality on any assured ground. We cannot pass within the veil and declare it is all void there. For aught anybody knows to the contrary, this being of earth, who is

never satisfied with what earth has to give, but who dreams and yearns toward unattained goals, is made for something more than a pilgrim of time and an imperfect wanderer on these lower plains. We may be heirs to a finer and more enduring inheritance. No one passing down into the valley is permitted to know that he may not pass triumphantly through, with angel-guides on the right hand and on the left, and with new lights and new scenes breaking upon him as from the radiant hills of Paradise. No one is privileged to say that the farewells of earth are not swiftly followed by the greetings of heaven; for the mortal eye cannot penetrate the mystic wall to see that there are no blest reunions beyond, as the ancients could not see that the lands beyond the uncrossed ocean were either barren or void of happy homes and glad hearts. No one knows that poets, prophets, saints, and all the great and good of earth have been mere dreamers of immortality, cherishing a fantasy, and cheated by an illusion. No Greek or French or American atheist is competent to utter the great and fatal negative

that robs the future of its vast and sacred charge,—the dear ones absent from our households, and all the noble of earth,—because no atheist is all-wise in a matter of this kind.

If we look only downward, and follow the groping of the poor sense-vision, the earth may seem to be only a sepulchre, its dust only the deposit of its fallen generations, coming and going in such swift succession from Adam to this hour. Our own poet Bryant sees the planet for a moment in this light, and strikes from his harp the sombre “*Thanatopsis:*”

“ All that tread
The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom.”

Thus, in spite of the strongest atheistic reasoning, it appears that Deity, the soul, and immortality, may still remain as the all-important realities of the universe, and that Hope is not compelled to hang her harp on the willows. I have not given now the positive arguments in favor of their existence, which are at once cumulative and strong, flowing in upon us from the wisdom and beauty of Nature,

rising up out of the spirit that is in us, attested by the great book of experience, as well as by the Bible of prophets and apostles. I have purposely left these witnesses unsummoned into the court of my present thought. I am content to show the inability of our absolute scepticism to justify its own attitude, and to bring to the doubting heart at least a distrust of its doubt. I have not chosen even to declare and illustrate the relation of faith in the spiritual universe to man's elevation and happiness,— how greatness and virtue and civilization move forward under the light of belief, and recede from the darkness of doubt, as flowers close on the approach of night; how the world's songs will be hushed, and its aspirations cut down; how sorrow will surge like an unrestrained tide, and conscience lose its better ideals, if these great negatives are held to: but, rather, I have chosen the humbler task of showing the fallacy of holding to them with anything like a firm hold, since there is no ample premise for certitude.

Such being the case, I come in conclusion to ask, Why is there the amount of painful

doubt and denial that we find in the world concerning the things that are superior to matter? Three responses are in order. In the first place, man is a natural critic of all things, a questioner, and in not a few cases a sturdy denier of all that others accept; and thus in the pride of his egotism he not seldom sweeps away much that is fairest and best. There is absolutely nothing that one and another of these reactionary souls has not brought under the fire of criticism and denial. It is an old satire on this trait which declares that the reason why God made man last in the order of creation was that he might thus escape having all his plans contested and his acts pronounced unwise in advance. The great artists reached no happy strokes of art that there were not others ready to condemn as falling short of the true ideal of beauty. The finest poems have been set aside as not fit for a place in the circle of literature. There have been those, on the one hand, who have denied the existence of matter; and those, on the other hand, who have denied the existence of spirit. Hence, we could not expect such as

these — and there seems always to be a percentage of them — to embrace heartily the general beliefs of mankind, but rather, if the masses were to go over to the negative, we should look to see them pass over to the affirmative.

In the next place, modern thought has been brought under a discipline of reaction on a very wide scale, and a habit of taking the negative and arguing against established conclusions has been acquired, which renders our thought unduly destructive. The last three centuries have been those of criticism and contention against the wild vagaries of an earlier day. The Dark Ages sent down huge masses of propositions in science and theology and government that had to be met and pushed under, as being fit only for the vast sea of oblivion. There were mountains of error and false usage to confront and set aside; and as our faces have been fashioned by the process of generations, so have the tendencies of our thought. Hence the ease with which we fall into denials after this long habit of antagonism.

But, finally, there is a lack of that spiritual imagination and activity that brings the divine side of the world out in conspicuous relief. We keep our matter-of-fact gifts in such constant training, and leave our idealizing powers so little used, that we have more faith in matter than in spirit; while yet the soul may become as assured as the senses if it is brought into as steady use; and especially if it shares an ordinary degree of constructive imagination or poetic ideality, it may have a vision of the divine, a conception of spiritual organism, and a bodying forth of the future in glowing perspective. In the New Testament story we see that Thomas depended only on his outward eye; and so must evermore the unpoetic nature. To such, faith is not easy, because the hidden is not seen under forms so real. It was the idealizing John whose soul found the joy and peace of faith and trust; and well will it be with you and me in the realization of the three greatest realities, — God, the soul, and immortality, — if we go forth in the exercise of our best gifts and amid the illumination of our loftiest hours.

V.

INFERENCES BASED ON GIFT
AND GROWTH.



V.

Inferences based on Gift and Growth.

Grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. —
EPH. iv. 15.

MONG all the traits of man it may be that no one is more marked than his capacity for education. The limit of this no one has yet dared define. Heights that a thousand years ago were regarded as inaccessible to mortal feet have been scaled; and yet the mind of man is still looking on with unabated ardor towards other summits that rise before. Even the most successful specialist, drawing out his one talent to the exclusion of all the others, seems not to have done anything more than to enter on the path that opens out into a luring perspective and fairly engage his single gift.

Agassiz declared to his class at Cambridge that in his special line of science he felt himself as one walking in the early dawn of the day, and with his powers just awakened. Even his scientific talent he felt to be more enveloped than developed. But of his other gifts he had almost no report to make. He had once written a poem, and had always read Dante and Milton and Wordsworth with a sweet delight; and he had often wondered to what extent the poetic fire might, under better circumstances, have been kindled in his soul. He had felt in rare moments the thrill of art sweeping across his spirit, — and no one could wonder at this who saw with what a free hand and easy grace he drew upon the blackboard his chalk-sketch of rock and bird and fish; but he had no wide leisure to devote to the opening out of this gift. He had at times discovered in himself a speculative tendency, and had dreams of revelling in the bright realms of philosophy; but he had never suffered his feet to stray away to the groves for meditation, or to the arenas for metaphysical debate. Thus he seemed to himself, as

he did to all who knew him, and as in fact he was, but as a many-stringed instrument with only one string in tune, or as a group of gifts for manifold attainments with only a single one brought under a partial discipline.

No evenly rounded life can be at all conspicuous for its acquirements; for it would require the study of many, many years to make it at all notable in the knowledge of the ages that are past, and in the comprehension of the ages to come. In an ordinary lifetime we can do little more than find out the existence of our many powers, or we can only set a few of them forward on the glowing and genial paths of life. All the greatness of earth up to the present time has been a partial greatness of the one who shared it, as Solomon was conspicuous for a sententious wisdom, Napoleon for soldiership, and Laplace for the science of numbers.

But turning away from a view of those eminent in one thing, to look at the masses, toiling for daily bread, compelled to walk apart from the schools, forbidden to keep company with the Muses, their leisure necessarily

given to rest and recreation, we seem to see a world of smothered gifts. As the geologist looks to the earth on which the race is dwelling, and sees in it in thought vast resources of ores and metals and precious stones laid away for future use; as the potter sees fine vases lying in the mass of unshaped clay; as the farmer sees the source of successive harvests in the virgin soil,—so every discerning eye discovers in this field of human life a world of capacity that sleeps even in the very beginning of its career. The glow of the morning, the touch of the spring, have not yet reached into those silent and shadowy depths. In other words, we discover all around us a great outfit for education, but seek in vain to see the glorious temple rising on ample proportions on this base. Only the foundation is laid, and a few scattering columns erected. The civilized man is still but meagrely educated, and wears his proud title only by courtesy. The men and women of our best society are nothing more than a few feeble notes in the full music of life; they are like organs with most of their pipes silent.

What a blessing is the school-house at the many cross-roads and in the cities; but how few of all the many gifts of childhood it reaches, and these few only with what poor sufficiency! Of its triumphs we may well boast, and may sturdily resist any hand that would close its inviting doors. Of all the good bequests of the Puritan fathers to us, this is at once the wisest and the most hopeful to the republic. And yet, after all its wonderful work, it necessarily leaves more of the gifts shared by this great crowd of children who are sporting at its doors or toiling within, untouched than it touches. Its training is, after all, limited and meagre. The child seems made for many schools besides this at the cross-roads,—for art schools, and for church schools, and for social schools, to draw out some of its finest attributes.

Such is the capacity of this creature called man for education,—for a various and indefinite advancement by culture. And now, with this thought in mind, let us give some moments to a study of the collateral thoughts that lie around the subject and are implicated in it.

We touch here one of the many arguments that seem to stand unshaken as yet against the evolution or Darwinian theory of the descent of man. In man's capacity for education we seem to see an original gift, and not an inherited one; for we see nothing like it in any lower race. In vain do we look for a progressive animal, for any brute tribe making the least experiment of education. In vain do we wait to see any creature not human leaving its low level and moving away from its ancestors and going on to new attainments. Until we come up to our own race we find no improvements being sought for and no progress made from any self-prompting. The level of a thousand years ago is the level of to-day in all the wild beasts and the wild birds, and there is still no sign of their taking up a forward march to the music of aspiration. No animal has invented an alphabet or learned its first letter, but everywhere man has made for himself a complex language. No animal has woven a garment, or stirred a fire, or invented the simplest device; and, moreover, we see no

signs of any beginnings in these matters, while man's world is full, and growing fuller, if you will pardon the solecism, of improvements. Hence, not to name in this connection all the arguments that sustain man's claim to an independent place in the scale of creation, I point you to this of his capacity for education. Here he seems a being by himself, inspired by gifts peculiarly his own. The chasm is too wide and the missing links are too many between him and the brute to admit of classing them in the same order. Like the brute, he is flesh,—and there the advantages may be against him; but unlike the brute, he is a great mind and a mighty spirit, and moves along the ways of growth so swiftly and ardently that his past seems low and poor, and his future great and rich.

Indeed, while man may lead the animal race a little forward to a greater beauty and use, as he can improve the wild rose and wild apple, it is still but a very little way that he can bear them on. Out of the chariot of culture they soon fall, and are left behind. To the earth they are chained; and if forced

up, like the stone, directly, if left alone, they return. He may tenderly caress and love his pets,— and this is one of the sweet and beautiful loves of the human heart,— and he may make laws to guard the dumb beasts from every form of cruelty,— and legislation can hardly be more honorably engaged; but he cannot take them into the fellowship of his lofty thoughts and sentiments as he turns to this great upper world of God and truth and immortality. There he must go alone, or take by the hand one of his own race. Only man is endowed with gifts that turn to an ideal world, and only man finds his very life and joy in progress. At this point he seems to part with the brute and stand in another order.

Another inference from this capacity of man for such visions and wonderful growth, for which time is too brief and the earth too narrow, is that his eager and unspent gifts should receive the needed extensions in duration and space,— just as the seed that cannot mature in June would be given till August or October to fulfil its course. In his unde-

veloped powers, hidden away in the depths of his being when the body can serve him no longer, in his gifts conferred but not yet educated, in his many inner germs and buds that have not in the earth found their needed summer, and in his aspirations that grow with the years but reach not their great prizes, we can but see a claim to immortality and a prophecy of it; and man may indeed come to his last hour with all the more of hope since he is so much of a fragment of what he was meant to be and created for. Since Nature makes beginnings only for ends, his incompleteness here becomes the sign of his continuance in another era. It is not in accord with the most obvious genius of the universe, apparent in the maturing of so much of life, that all these rarer gifts in us, as of poetry and art and learning and virtue and love, should be cut short in their half-growth, or, it may be, ere they have begun to quicken under the smile of a finer light and air. As we see the leaf falling only after it has become full grown; as we observe that the rose is not arrested in the bud, but is

guarded till its petals open, and the lovely hues are all painted on, and the perfect fragrance is borne away on the breeze; as we see the tree is given all the time it needs, a century, or a thousand years, and no English yew or American elm is stinted in the gift of days needful to mature it; as we see each robin and eagle and elephant spared to reach the ideal of its kind; and as we note that the human body climbs to its natural zenith of growth; as we study this wide usage in Nature of protecting capacity for its culmination, so that in the incipiency we have the evidence of the end to be won,—do we not find the witness of a great law, which is as just as it is great, that the soul will not be forsaken in the midst of its career and suffered to perish in the bud? Must there not also be a fairness in Providence towards this being who is made thus too great and too aspiring for his earthly sphere, and needs a cycle instead of threescore and ten years, or the briefer round of a generation, in which to fill out the ideal of his creation?

As one sails down the Hudson towards New York there appears at one point a mountain

standing apparently across the river; but we know that this flowing stream, borne on by inherent forces, will not pause at that hill and vanish away, but that it will be given a path, and move in an unchecked current beyond the seeming barrier. Thus all unspent force is conserved and guaranteed continuance; and hence the soul, with its powers mainly enfolded in this life, may look to some after and greater era and to some higher and more adequate schooling in which all the germs of its being shall bud and bloom and bear fruit. Otherwise the waste of gifts of the finest quality will be a signal blot on the fair spirit of the universe.

Another lesson from this great capacity of education is the much-needed one that growth is the law of all progress. It is not reasonable to suppose, since this highway has been thrown open before us and made so easy and inviting, so honorable and delightful to all pilgrims on it, that any other or shorter cut will be made possible. One ample road, enchanted with perpetual allurements, is all we need, and over this each

one may and should pass to the shining goals. It would not be best that any part of our nature should be caught up and borne on in the arms of miracle to the fulness of its special life, since thus the double blessing of culture or growth would be lost,—the joy of it and the merit of it. The only heaven that can be truly such is one that the spirit wins by opening out under discipline, into beauty and greatness, its immortal powers. The salutations that are conferred are no salutations at all. A saint would cast his crown from his brow and seek to hide from the fair eye of the angels if his saintship did not reflect the consecration of his own will and the faithful toil of his own powers. The heaven that religion sometimes offers is no heaven whatever, and souls look upon it for a little, and turn away from the thought of it, and pursue it no more.

The defect in the salvation offered by the great revivalists is that it is no salvation, reflecting no honor on the soul that might share it, and no long rising of joy in its acquirement. It is the acquirement of an

evening, of a moment,—the swift work of the Spirit on the heart, all accomplished and sealed between rising from the tea-table and retiring to the night's rest. At the close of a meeting the professional revivalist will count up the souls that have got salvation since the service was opened. But while the thoughtless are happy for a little in their fancied possession that they have got, they know not how—certainly not by any toil or merit of their own—after a time they awake to the meagreness of their spiritual wealth, and see how poor is the crown to which they are entitled, and turn away in sadness or in disgust. The prize is not golden and solid and a jewel to be worn with a high sense of honor, but it is only a glittering void. The fact is, a conferred saintship is no more possible than a machine-made poem, or a heroism that is compelled; for God has not made an exception of the soul in subjecting man to the law of education and growth. He has not left the spirit out in harnessing the powers of man to the chariot of culture, but has asked it also to make its own the delights

and honors of traversing the highway of self-improvement and growth.

Hence the text wisely calls us to "grow up into Christ in all things;" and in this statement, recognizing growth as the law of all spiritual advancement, Paul but echoes what the Master had already announced as the method of the kingdom in his parable of the leaven and in the words, "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." It is the law of all life that develops from within, and not by endowment. Even as the bird and flower generate by the chemistry of natural growth the fine hues that adorn them, so must the soul work out its own salvation; and then it will have the daily joy and credit of the victory. As a painted bird or rose would have a fit reason to hide away from observation, so would a spirit that had been saved by some degree of election or the power of a miracle.

Let us see that there can be no worthy salvation except our own toil subserves it. The noble soul cares not to be saved on other terms. When the old Saxon chief was

led down to the river by the missionary to receive Christian baptism, and with one foot in the water paused to ask if the act would separate him from his pagan ancestors, and was told it would, he manfully withdrew, and refused to go to a heaven that threw open only such narrow doors. Thus a high-minded spirit turns from a bliss that is not the sign and reward of its own free-will and obedience. It asks the privilege of cutting and polishing the jewels in its own crown. It would stand amid the wealth of its immortal joys with some title to the possession that contains on it the witness of its honorable ownership.

Do not think that I am ascribing to the true soul a rejection of Divine aid. This aid it will always covet. On the great sea of life it will seek the heavenly lights to sail by, and will invoke the favoring breezes; but it will ask to enter the final haven from a voyage made happy by a well-chosen activity, and covered with an honor in some good degree its own.

VI.

FAITH CONFIRMED BY PROGRESS.



VI.

Faith confirmed by Progress.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. — 1 COR. xiii. 11.

TIS sometimes affirmed that the race is moving away from all religion, as from a childish interest which belongs not to its manhood, and that in the coming era of a fuller development all the once sacred terms and usages will be set aside. No more after the dawn of that great day of perfect enlightenment will the race erect an altar or busy itself about a creed. In this ominous voice must be heard but an echo of an order of thinkers known as Positivists or Secularists. Others may have joined these, without taking their name, in the belief that religion will ultimately throw out its white flag of sur-

render in the great struggle for existence, and yield the arena solely to other interests.

But is enlightenment thus hostile to faith in a spiritual universe? Does a general progress carry with it the prophecy of the decay and final death of this spirit that has walked our earth so long and in such queenlike aspects under the name of religion? or does it rather disclose the truth of an opposite conclusion; namely, that this queen, while she may be busy casting off some of her old robes and renouncing some of her childish ways, is still active in the formation of a more worthy character and the choosing of a more fitting drapery, which shall make her a permanent favorite with the people? Is religion all in all such a childish thing that we shall set it wholly aside in our full-grown manhood, or shall we rather ask to have it assume some larger and truer form and remain with us, as we exchange cobble-houses for real ones, and nursery-rhymes for a grander poetry, and a mimic commerce for an actual one? Does religion grow with our growth, and strengthen with our strength, and move steadily along by

our side amid all the stages of culture? or, like a spectre of the night, will she refuse to follow us into the midday of enlightenment?

Of one thing the most ultra-positivist and doubter concerning the perpetuity of religion must be assured, it is so patent to reason and true to history; namely, that progress will increase rather than lessen the desire for a wider and higher life than that of earth and time. The richer our days become, the more we shall shrink at the idea of their termination, and long to see a path open for their continuance. The fuller the vase of life and the sweeter its contents, the more shall we regret to have it broken, and its contents spilled on the earth like water that cannot be gathered up. Travellers have found tribes so little developed that they thought and cared almost or quite nothing about a life apart from the body and an existence beyond death. The value and desirableness of a mental and moral and spiritual estate they had not discovered, and were ready to perish with the dust. The better life had not dawned on their inner vision to entrance and lure them. Of a blessed commu-

nion with an ideal world, a world of principles, sentiments, imaginations, and essences, they knew nothing. Of the rich experiences of the savant and saint, the poet and pietist, they were ignorant; and hence they saw nothing to be desired when eating and sleeping and the chase and the sum of mortal interests were at an end. Since their experiences did not rise above the carnal level, they had no reason for sending desires and hopes beyond the grave.

But let these same tribes be led along the path of progress till the whole group of sleeping gifts within them are awakened and made glad in high activities, and how changed would be their estimates and aspirations! Let the finer cups be filled with the finer contents, and how they would shrink from having them broken! Let the mind orb itself into view through education; let the moral nature take a fast hold on righteousness; let the heart reach on to the better order of friendships in which intelligence glorifies love; let the soul be kindled to a spiritual flame through contact with the divine,— and no more would it seem to these poor beings that the sensations of the

flesh are the all in all of existence, but rather would they consider these but as the dim dawn of the full day of life's greatness and glory, and directly would they turn with longing towards a continuance of this deeper self and this richer experience. No tribes rise thus but to meet on their path a desire for immortality. To beget and foster such a desire is one of the offices of civilization; and so, while in some wild Australia or early Mexico we may not discover this aspiration, we see it rising in conspicuous forms out of the best days of nations: and in every great age, religion as a faith and a hope has been eagerly coveted. For greatness would not perish. Genius shrinks from lying down in the dust. Progress opens prospects which must ever lure and attract. A Comanche and a Hottentot may have nothing to conserve; but every unfolded spirit under the spring and summer of culture gathers much to the store of life it would not have dissipated to be known no more forever. Still would all such souls keep and wear the jewel of life, whose lustre so pleases. Still would we all retain the

rich treasures to which we have attained on the highway of progress. Hence religion is not that childish thing which belongs only to a rude age, but rather it becomes more and more an object of life's desire as that life increases in richness and sweetness; for it is the great and the good who would be immortal and drink deeper the crystal spring.

If it may be said with some truth that the lowest savage and the darkest sinner do not care for an eternity, this certainly is far enough from being the true report of the ripened mind and the noble soul, which in the ratio of earthly greatness and gladness must long for continuance. The great, the good, and the true, turn to the future and sigh for an immortality, that they may bear on their superior riches and open ever and ever their coffers, which contain such beautiful and pleasing gems. A rare spirit would not cease to be. "Let me live forever," cried Saadi, the gifted child of the Orient. "To the sod I can willingly give my body," said the weary Mozart, "but not to eternal silence my soul." He loved music too well to bid it an eternal adieu.

Thus would the enriched soul live on and keep its riches forever.

But the progress of which we are speaking, ever deepening the desire for a religious hope, will, it is true, be found hostile to all those forms of faith and ritual, coming down from a childish past, which are at once irrational and harmful. Progress will make war on them; nor can they abide with the larger measures of light and life. As the youth and man must set aside the thoughts and garments of the child, so will a later stage of progress be called upon to protest against much in religion's name which was once deemed sacred and found useful. New times will demand new creeds and new altars; and in this breaking away from the faiths and customs of the fathers it may be felt by some of the conservative ones that religion itself is in peril, and about to be consigned to the owls and bats that frequent deserted ruins. As some old castle on the Rhine, no more inhabited, sits as a gloomy witness of a once busy past, when its halls rang with the shouts of festivity or the clamors of conflict, so it is

feared by the more timid ones that religion will some day, and that not far away, sit by the roaring tide of human life in unused desolation,—a monument in ruins of a once devout and God-fearing and heaven-seeking past!

But there is no reason for such an anxiety. One form of religion will be forsaken only that another form, more rational and congenial, may be sought out. As already suggested, the greater and richer life towards which progress is bearing us does not prophesy a decline, but rather an increase in the desire for an immortality and a perfection; and we may readily infer that such an enlarged desire will hardly permit the riper man of the coming ages to be thoughtless about the grounds of faith and hope. He cannot be indifferent to the intimations of another world and a wider area for the use and joy of his enriched being.

But the fear of an outgrown religion is also seen to be an ill-founded alarm as we survey the necessary activity of all the great instincts. Man's greater gifts — like that which strives for a government, or that which shapes

a social condition, or that which asks for a creed and a worship — appear on the historic page as ever busy modifying and improving their lot; but nowhere do we discover one of these gifts getting ready to die. A defunct instinct is not to be found in all the long path of life that the race has traversed. In all the course of history there is no spot marked, no monument set up with a plaintive epitaph on it, where a power or passion of human nature was thrust aside and perished like a fallen leaf, and where man may go and muse and shed a tear as he says: “Here lies buried one of humanity’s great instincts!” By the long and wide path no such gift lies sleeping; but all which the earliest man carried, so far as history speaks, the latest born shares, but now more mature and active.

I am aware that a hypothetical science, an unproved Darwinism, points to a prehistoric period in which man cast off a covering of fur, and dropped one extremity of his being, and rose from all-fours to an erect posture. But the links are all missing that might authenticate this scientific guess. But in all

the thousands of years we can trace there has remained a fixed array of instincts; and ever have these been active in making history and striving to improve their conditions. Hence there has been a great progress from man's humble beginning to his present high attainments; and there is no reason to believe that any gift thus busy for ages is likely to fall by the way and perish.

But rather will progress secure to each instinct a new vigor and zest; for so far it has been thus in history. In the Dark Ages the soul was dormant and listless; but with the Renaissance it came to the front and has grown vigorous, and has matured a religion in its more advanced state, reached through liberty and culture, with which that of Pope Gregory in the tenth century compares only as a wax figure arrayed in cheap tinsel compares with a stalwart body robed for service, or as a weak sapling compares with a lordly mountain oak.

In the last fifty years — the foremost in the career of the race — the soul of man has been more busy than ever before, setting aside a

childish past, and shaping a more manly present in the matter of religion. Dark and cruel fancies, which moved along undisturbed in the less thoughtful eras, have been put to flight by a more active reason, and many absurd forms have given place to a newly rising spirit. Theology has never been tried by such searching tests. The busy mind and heart of our time have shaped a more rational and cheering faith and hope, and the radiant banner can be borne on with a new acclaim. Before our age the name of Christ rises with a new interest and power, and is becoming very rapidly the centre of a broad religious fellowship; and it would almost seem as if the day were not far from us in which it will no more be asked in what creed do you believe, but do you give yourself to the fellowship of Jesus and the simple religion of the Gospels? And at length all that large section of society called childhood is being awakened to the moralities and humanities and aspirations of religion.

Thus let us see the signs in these later days, not of religious decay, but of its transi-

tion to more mature and manly forms; but let us confess that that is happening which we ought to expect, that a large crowd is filing away from the old, in the general break with its childishness and inadequacy, but is not marching with eager feet to the acceptance of the new. It is ever thus; for it is easier to observe and renounce an error than to see and embrace a higher truth. For the latter it takes time and discipline. But still, the better faith and the sweeter piety are already taking a firm hold of not a few, and will at length reclaim the many, since they will happily supply the needs of that instinct which has been so great a factor in all ages and nations,—great in life's best hours, great in its vales of sorrow, and great in the final hours of earth. And let us see that such an instinct cannot perish and pass away, but that, like every other gift of human nature, it will go on assuming more ideal forms and activities—weaving a more perfect web of thoughts, communions, impulses, endearments, and hopes!

Rejoicing thus that the future will have this great stream of religion pouring along

through it, to make green its valleys and fertile its wide fields, let us study for a little while the value of that riper faith and piety as a witness to the reality of a God and the immortality for souls to which they aspire.

In general terms, it must be said that progress removes us from errors and illusions. There is less and less reason to distrust the verdicts, on whatever matter, of a progressive humanity. Advancement is through the dawn into light; and it is thus that in the more perfect religious life which progress will evolve — a lower authority being set aside, and the soul resting in its own improved vision — there will be found a more vivid witness of a Deity and an immortality. So distinctly will these things be felt that their existence will be recognized. A sense thus assured to the human nature from which a long progress has removed all childishness, is a most reliable testimony.

In all ages it has been confessed that the kingdoms of morals and of beauty lie in direct contact with the kingdom of the Divine, as the earth lies against the realm of air and

light. Hence the great moralists and artists have all been worshippers. Not an exception can be named; for they have felt a spiritual presence brooding over virtue and beauty, and have walked along these high paths as in the company of a holy and beautiful spirit. Hence righteousness has been called the garment of the Deity, and beauty has been regarded as the fringe of his flowing robe. In these lofty realms he dwells as in a pavilion of glory. His habitations are they; and whoever passes through their sacred portals and abides in righteousness and beauty, will find himself in friendly relations with a Deity, and in sensible contact with an over-sweeping immortality. And so when progress on its rising tide bears a race to these altitudes, its experiences of divinity and destiny may be taken as individual proofs of their reality.

But note once more how progress, giving scope and clearness to the vision of equity, and intensity to the claim for its realization, awakens a demand — a just demand — for another life, that the incomplete moral adminis-

tration and book-keeping of this world may be carried out to a just consummation; that all inequalities may be adjusted, all merited rewards attained, all deserved penalties inflicted, all wounded loves healed, all unspent powers, when Death serves his summons, given further opportunity, and all mysteries solved, over which our nature has been inspired to toil. And in this sure demand of the best souls and the most advanced mankind, let us read the prophecy of a God who will give to all a future, and secure to all their dues. Without this issue the universe seems sadly imperfect, and not homogeneous with itself. It seems like the tuning of instruments without permitting the music; or like a promise made and broken; or like a jangle in the equities never to be harmonized. The thought of beings passing out of existence to whom deserved rewards and penalties have not been meted out, nor a further chance, required for fairness, given, is painful in the extreme. An eternal injustice blotting the wide page, who can bear the thought! Said one of old, "Let justice be done, though the

heavens fall;" and in the best age of the world, a vast chorus of voices will take up the refrain.

But our theme calls for one word more. The vast progress of the race of man from its primitive condition towards a superior world, marks it as more than an animal or brute order. From the material, man constantly ascends to the spiritual, and seeks to make his encampment amid the glories of the Divine and the eternal. His imposing arch of progress he starts as if it were to span the tomb and rest on the everlasting hills. And in all this he shows himself to be a rightful heir to immortality. In his speech, his understanding, his thought, which are no more childlike, but exalted and on-reaching, he reveals his heirship to a yet unattained eminence, and a glory only dawning as yet on his vision.



VII.

RIGHTEOUSNESS.



VII.

Righteousness.

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. — 2 PETER iii. 13.

THE one thing of special interest in connection with this outlook of Peter towards the “new heavens and a new earth” is the single quality of life which he contemplates and that fires his heart. That quality is righteousness. In that great renewal he seems to see, as in a blessed vision, one fair spirit walking abroad in a superior beauty and glory; and that is the spirit of virtue. There are other spirits in the coming kingdom of heaven,—whether it be here or hereafter,—of surpassing excellence. All that will then make their advent will be of highest lineage and divinest aspect; but as one star differs from another in glory, so will it be in

the kingdom of God; and the star that will shine the brightest and with the richest beams in that galaxy of life, will be the golden orb of righteousness. For the moment Peter seems to see only this faith, as one may notice only the evening star, oblivious of its shining companions. But Hope will also be there, glowing with the flush of the full assurance drawn from its already happy fruitions. Love will be there, with its endeared face and its soft hands. Wisdom will walk abroad in her garments of light, and rejoice in her vast stores of disclosed secrets gathered from various and wide fields. Joy will move about in that high company, wreathed in smiles and decked in gayest flowers. All these will come to dwell in the "new heavens and new earth" in a grateful harmony. The coming reign of Christ shall draw these angels down to the abodes of men, and lead them forth on the arenas where the immortals abide.

But Peter seems to take no note of these, since he is so engrossed in his view of righteousness. Among all the angels he saw this

as the very archangel, towering so far above the others in its greatness and in its service that they seemed to be eclipsed, as the planets in the presence of the sun. Hence he exultingly exclaims, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

If Peter, living in more moral days than ours, and amid a greater obedience to the laws of duty as they run between man and man, constituting a network of shining paths, had come to place virtue, probity, a full heart of rightness, at the very front, as the best thing of time or eternity, how much more reason have we to do so, who live in these days smitten with moral crookedness and general disregard of the ways of justice! Surely to us no spirit should seem so fair and desirable as righteousness! Our age should wander down the future to that better time coming, to see, of course, all the glories that Jesus of Judæa came to bring forth to dwell among men, and that will find their place amid a truly regenerated and perfected humanity; but still with Peter should we see

righteousness as the chiefest of the glories. Christ will bear us on through the fair and happy avenues of growth to nothing else so much to our honor and gladness as this.

Let us attempt to ascertain and mark out the place that righteousness must hold in a true civilization; or, in other words, let us try to get at the grounds for a conclusion such as that arrived at by Peter.

Shall we call righteousness the keystone of the beautiful arch of life, without which the whole fair structure is liable to fall, like the badly roofed walls that our bad architects and bad builders have sometimes erected? Yes; righteousness is the keystone that sustains all the rest, and gives us confidence that every other principle and every other power will hold its place and stay fast in the fulfilment of its office. Take the moral stamina away from a man, or a community of men, and, if I have read history aright, and am not guilty of poor reasoning, all that is left of life, however fair and good, is endangered, and we may look to see it collapse and pass into ruin. The conserving power is taken away, like

withdrawing the salt from the meat you are essaying to preserve. The antiseptic element is cancelled, and corruption is almost sure to follow, as decay seizes on vegetation, sooner or later, when the internal life-condition terminates. The unrighteous are not to be counted on with any great certainty in any sphere of their activity, since the moral principle is related to every other with a sustaining and guaranteeing presence, and needs to be at hand and active to secure piety from degenerating to a trick and a cheat for selfish designs, and to hold love from becoming a cruel artifice to take in the unwary, and to keep wisdom from yielding itself as a tool in the interest of wrong-doing.

Under each of these great agents of civilization, with missions as universal as beautiful, must repose the granite base of honesty, or they may come down in a sad wreck in some moment of trial. In its sustaining place must be the keystone of moral character, or the shining walls, built of the white marble of piety and love and wisdom, may at any time shatter and crumble, and pass away like a fair

vision, to leave some hideous scene in its stead. Piety, Love, Wisdom, the three celestial columns, than which neither heaven nor earth can have any more beautiful, and around which the very angels will rejoice to cluster, will never stand firm and sure, bearing steadily up against every dashing wave, unless they are set in the everlasting rock of righteousness, even as the lighthouses along our storm-beaten shores stand only because they have granite security beneath them. Conscience is the only guaranty for the soul and the heart and the mind that they will steadily and surely play the parts they assume, and never play false.

How often do we find friendship broken because, lacking the sway of honesty in one party or the other, it took advantage of the confidence it had gained! Love, not morally sustained, not infrequently stabs the life it has drawn to its bosom, for the sake of some selfish gain of place or wealth or liberty! Wisdom, at the bidding of injustice, strays from the divine path it clearly sees, and arms the base hand of the bad with double power

to do evil. And Piety prays to be heard of men, and to draw the thoughtless into its own crafty coils, rather than to lift itself up into the embrace of the Holy Spirit. An under-current of virtue, or manly honesty, will alone bear these spirits along the celestial ways. And hence we may well join Peter in his rapt and exclusive outlook towards the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, or this foremost spirit of time and eternity.

But some one may ask: "What are you going to do with Paul's reckoning, that places, or seems to place, charity, or love, at the front as the chief grace? How reconcile the teaching of this sermon and the gospel of the great Apostle to the Gentiles as we have it in his immortal classic, never surpassed, never equalled, that he wrote for the church at Corinth?" Well, I shall say, in the first place, that Paul does not name righteousness at all in his enumeration of the graces in this instance, and that if he had named it, we know not but he might have put the one Peter foresaw at the very head of the list. We are not

sure but the unspoken name would have stood above charity. I can hardly believe, in the light of what I have said, that he would have chosen for the world faith or hope before righteousness; for it is a thousand times better that men should have no piety, and that they should hang the sweet harp of hope in sadness on the willows, than that they should be morally corrupt and the slaves of injustice. The atheist may yet be honorable, and a safe man in the community, like the learned and just Thomas Hobbes in England, or the famous Hollander Spinoza, who lived well and wrote his greatest work on ethics; but from the corrupt man honor flies as beauty from a reeking cavern. The life that sees no radiant path opening down into the future, and that moves on uncheered by a happy expectancy, may yet be a life to be well thought of and spoken of with praise; but the morally debased life is stripped of its claim to regard. Surely would Paul have surrendered faith and hope from the earth sooner than virtue and justice, as any mother would rather have her son or daughter walk apart, here in the earth,

from the divine face and the pleasant light of immortality, than apart from the paths of integrity, purity, and daily honor.

But love is so essential to life, and comes among men with its arms so full of joys and blessings, that it would almost seem it could not be placed below righteousness; and yet I believe had Paul made the comparison, from which he may justly have shrunk, he would have placed it there. For, as I have said, virtue is the very base and security of love; and it seems to me better that one should move coldly among the people he meets, unstirred by sympathy, unwarmed by the blood of a tender heart, than that he should disregard the laws of right, and wander recklessly from the moral ways. But the author of that great chapter on love has not left us by any means to guess at his high estimate of righteousness; for if when love was in his mind he could not find it in his heart to advance any word that should seem to dim, by a shade, her brightness, at other times he magnifies, with a free emphasis, the moral attribute of man. Listen to these periods:

“Be ye holy, even as God is holy.” “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

“Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” “Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.” To his son in the Gospel, the youthful Timothy, he gives this advice: “But thou, O man of God, flee these things,” — the things that are of evil report, — “and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness,” —

wherein, as you see, he places righteousness at the front, and brings in faith and love to grace the sacred procession later in its make-up. In the very midst of his great argument in view of immortality, in the 15th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, what is the practical appeal with which he startles the church in the corrupt pagan city, and which in its own short course had fallen into vicious practices? Does he say, Get more faith, increase the bright plumes of hope, enhance the ardor of love? No; but he says, as with trumpet-tones, "Awake to righteousness, and sin not." And when the great apostle turned from his heroic and manly career to contemplate the reward that awaited him, what did he say? "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."

So much for Paul. If he could not disparage love, he could extol, with every form of rhetoric and every privilege of situation, the grace of righteousness. But he was not alone among the sacred writers in wreath-

ing this chaplet to adorn the brow of the majestic spirit. The terms "righteous" and "righteousness" occur in the Bible nearly five hundred times. Even as the stars bestud the sky, or the rubies glisten in some favored soil, or the flowers adorn the summer fields, do these great words glow on the pages of Scripture. Neither of faith, nor of hope, nor of love, is so much said. And all of the high literature of the ages shows a similar high estimate of the virtue that Peter fore-saw in the "new heavens and the new earth."

Does it not seem passing strange, in looking over this whole ground of divine and human testimony on behalf of the greatness and glory of righteousness, that religion, which ought to extol it most eloquently and urgently, has rather pushed it into the back-ground, and spoken of it almost slightly? It has not, for some strange reason, been a favorite theological grace; and we all know that there have been mouths made up at it, that it has been called "filthy rags," and that like degrading epithets have been hurled at it. The revivalists say little about it in

their earnest harangues, making up a cheap scheme of salvation, with this grace virtually counted out. They say much more of the "blood of Jesus" than of the righteousness of man. Actually stereotyped and threadbare have become the pious warnings to the people not to rely on good works and the uprightness of their lives. But Paul taught another doctrine; and as he stood under the great light of eternity, discoursing of the resurrection and the differing glory of souls, as of the stars, he sent his whole heart into that one appeal: "Awake to righteousness, and sin not."

Let us see how these revivalists and St. Paul appear as they might stand before two contrasting characters to pass sentence on them as to which would rank highest in the "new heavens and the new earth" that the reign of Christ is to bring forth. On the one hand is a new convert snatched from the purlieus of the city like a brand from the burning. He is full of fresh zeal, and prayer and song flow out of his soul like a stream from a full fountain. Yesterday he was a sinner; to-day he is a saint. The mark of

Satan has been erased, and the sign of the cross set on his brow. All this is blessed, and we have no fault to find with it; on the contrary, we could devoutly wish that all the sin-scarred might arise and move on into this new light and hope.

On the other hand, we have a man of sterling virtue, honored and trusted by all, like a ship that has weathered the stormy sea again and again, and come off victor. He is a man of truth and probity, not especially moved by any of the pious emotions, and yet not irreverent, but always noble in his purposes and just in his deeds,—a good solid character in the things that are right and equitable.

To the first of these the revivalists of the modern theology would award the palm for the best standing in the realm of the Saviour and for marching under the rainbow of promise towards the heavenly country; but to the second, as I read St. Paul, would he assign the foremost place and the most hopeful outlook in the “new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

Within the last few years one and another of the praying ones have passed into the ranks of great criminals,— defaulters and thieves; this, however, is no argument against prayer and worship, but only against a form of religion that exalts these at the expense of the moral elements of life. It is a sufficient testimony to the general utility of religion, that were we to go into any large city to select a thousand of the best families, we should, in the main, take them from the church-going circles, from such as observed the Sunday and gave their thoughts to sacred themes; or, on the contrary, were we to seek out a thousand of the worst families, we should search for them amid the non-church-going,— those who give no heed to the Sabbath bell, nor send their thoughts to contemplate the great ideals of life. This fact shows us that there is some relation between religion and a better life, between piety and virtue. But that relation would be seen in a clearer light if the churches had not seemed to permit an unnatural divorce. They have woven a fairer crown for faith

than works, for prayer than for good deeds, for sanctity than for integrity. But let us believe that piety without honesty will not take one so near the throne as honesty without piety. The latter is the weightier grace, and carries the better title, as a lord outranks a citizen. Happy is he who is clad in all the Christian graces, and goes up to the celestial court in full dress; "his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," his soul wearing "the sword of the spirit," gleaming with the polish of long and faithful use, his head crowned with the "helmet of salvation," and having on the "breastplate of righteousness;" but if he must go forth robed in any single mantle, let it be the mantle of moral excellence. There is no coin so current at the open gate as that which bears the mint-mark, the image and superscription, of a life well lived. Hence, let us take to ourselves in the most practical manner the words of the text: "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

VIII.

THE LAW OF SERVICE.



VIII.

The Law of Service.

And for their sakes I sanctify myself. — JOHN xvii. 19.

AT one accustomed to regard the man of Nazareth as belonging to the rank of the perfect, these words are met in the reading of the New Testament with a touch of surprise. How can the waters of crystal purity be cleansed and made more clear and sparkling? Can the perfect circle be still rounded, and an absolute square more completely squared? If quantity is, without fault, so that beyond every horizon another lifts its enchanting line, and after every to-morrow a new day awaits to dawn, the same is not true of quality; for there is a justice that cannot be more just, a love that involves every element of the celestial

principle, and an honor that is as free from spot and tarnish as the clear blue of the Italian sky. And such a final and absolute estate of life on its moral side seems to have been shared by the Saviour of men. He was true as truth, virtuous as virtue, and humane as charity itself. In him was no guile. In a crooked and perverse world the lines of his pathway from Bethlehem to Calvary never swerved from a divine standard. He put every temptation aside through the majesty of a peerless character, and opposed to the fiery stings of hatred the cool breath of a heavenly love. And yet we read in our text that this ideally sacred man sanctified himself: "For their sakes I will sanctify myself." What can it mean? Had he fallen into a fit of momentary depression, and failed to see himself as he was? Or had he mingled with the sinful till he had through some confusion taken to himself their sense of shortcoming? As he made the woes of others his own, had he also stepped from his own moral centre and adopted the self-consciousness of sin common to his neigh-

bors? No, nothing of the kind. He had simply felt the claim of humanity upon him, and employed this term "sanctify" in its external and objective sense, as signifying devotement, surrender to an apparent and gracious line of conduct, that would be both an example and an inspiration to the world, and not in its internal sense of moral and spiritual consecration.

For their sakes he would make his love and wisdom manifest even in a life of hardships and a death of ignominy. For their sakes he would not restrain and hide the truth, but make it known, cost whatever it might of personal ease and comfort. For their sakes he would choose poverty and ridicule and a path stretching along thorny and rocky ways, and in lieu of the grateful and safe haunts of Galilee accept the fearful agony of the Garden and the wild woes of Calvary. To these duties he gave himself in a spirit of true devotion that has drawn encomiums of praise from infidel lips, and earned him a crown of fame that shall never lose its lustre while the conscience of man is

loyal, and his heart grateful. Great within, he would pass on to an outward greatness,—the greatness of love and sacrifice. The radiance of his soul he would flash along the untrod and divine pathways, that the blind might see, and the timid take courage, and the sinful return, as on a road illuminated by the light of a living example.

The law of the text as it falls from the lips of Jesus is therefore the law of service on behalf of others,—the putting of our powers forth in acts of humanity, the applying of our talents in ways that shall tell on the world's good. I do not mean to say that it ignores the more primary sense of the word "sanctify." The imperfect can do nothing better in the interest of others than to make nobler their inmost life; for character is, after all, the fountain-head of blessed influences, as the sun is of light and heat. A true life becomes an open secret, and steadily impinges with saving sway on the life around it. The great power of man for humanity's good is after all the silent and sure power of moral greatness. Ever thus apart from all conscious aims and

overt activities lies the divine force of a noble spirit daily and hourly casting forth its sweet and potent emanations. There is such a thing as force of character: that has been recognized in all times and lands; and it is the supreme force in man. It makes his sway out of all proportion to his speech, and generates an influence that shall often far outrun the survival of his name. It is the mother's real sceptre, and the warrior's strongest panoply. It is the magic charm that makes silence eloquent and a mere attitude efficient. Who does not know that there is nothing in the history of Sir Philip Sidney to justify the great place he holds in England's and the world's estimate? He achieved no signal victory on the field of battle, sung no great song to inspire the heart, carried no great issue in civil affairs to a happy end, left no large estates to mitigate the needs of successive generations; and yet Sidney is a most tenderly cherished and deeply honored name, and we can only say it is what the man was,—the genial sway of a noble life: that explains the general reverence of the race.

Something of this contrast between the meed of honor and an actual career obtains in the case of many of the world's great men. Character rather than history floats the name on every wind, to touch with a healthy potency millions of hearts.

And this is a general record. The cases I have cited but reflect a law old as Adam and new as the present hour. And hence we must infer the value of inward sanctity as a means of grace and blessing to others; and if we are true to our privilege and the great law of love, we shall solemnly lay upon our hearts and souls the claim of self-discipline in the interest of those near to us and of mankind. For their sakes we shall seek to be noble, as in the line of service on nobility's behalf.

But our text speaks to a later issue, and commends the unselfish and humane use of our already acquired character. It calls us, in the light of the Divine example, to do something with what we are, to take our gifts, as we hold them to-day and every day, and cast them forth in the actual service of men.

This is what Jesus did, and this is the first and great law of the kingdom of heaven, whether it be here among us, or yonder amid the radiance of the constellations and the unrevealed wonders and glories of eternity. Helpfulness! That is the great principle that glows in the Master's words. The doing of something from the standpoint of our actual being that shall redound to the good of our kind; the emergence from a practical hermitage in which so many seem content to live, hiding their light as under a bushel, and contracting their influence as within the walls of a cloister, and standing forth to join the great army of toilers for a common weal and a broader good,—this is the lesson of the text evident on the mere statement.

Let us now look at the grounds on which this law of service reposes, and see how wise and urgent they are. Note first that we all stand under an immense debt to mankind for values received, and must discharge that obligation, and thus rightly adjust the scale of equity by doing for others as others have wrought for us. Our inheritance entails upon

us the duty of unselfish toils; for the man who takes but will not give, who gathers but will not scatter abroad, who is a recipient but refuses to be an almoner, who lives only to absorb like a sponge, who hoards like the miser, has not met the just claim of humanity upon him. He draws from the past, but means to cheat the present and rob the future. His are the traits of an ingrained selfishness that greedily appropriates ministrations but never ministers. For just consider what he owes to the toils of others, what you and I owe to busy brains and active hands, not our own, that have made the world for us what it is. It is little that we can do for ourselves to make our conditions tolerable, and especially enviable, in comparison with the great sum of labor that must needs be done for us. We can do something for ourselves, but others have done vastly more for us. For really the past, reaching back for ages, has been the great workshop for the present, and every generation is far more the inheritor than the creator of its blessings. All these blessings of what we call civilization,—our

sentiments in their refinement, and our hopes in their full radiance,— whence came they? Not out of the laboratory of to-day and from our own toils, but they were wrought for us in the days that are past, and by hands long since fallen: the toilers of other times have made them over to us. All the best things of time have been slow growths under the patient husbandry put forth by talent and genius. Take any of the great sentiments of the hour, and it will be easy to see how little we have done to make them what they are. The idea of God, now so great and beautiful a conception, has been toiled at for thousands of years and slowly evolved, one great thinker after another cutting away an absurdity and adding a rational extension,— prophets and poets and moralists and the great Teacher of Judæa,— and the bettering generations finally passing over to us the theology that gives joy to the mind and peace to the soul. And thus has it been with the idea of liberty, justice, charity, and all the amenities of our civilization. These beautiful statues have been carved and set up for us, age after age adding

to their fairness and greatness. Often has the work gone on under fearful trials and at heavy costs, that our inheritance might be more to our minds and our hearts.

And out of this bequest arises a claim. If humanity has thus enriched us, then in equity humanity may demand something of us; for what is humanity but a perpetuated firm whose claims are cancelled only by their payment? Truly have we received, and hence freely must we give. And yet how many are there who clutch their rich blessings and lug them away into a selfish seclusion, absorbing the light, but never letting it shine; deriving culture from school and temple that enriches and sweetens the years, but making no return; accepting shelter from the state, but ignoring all the duties of the citizen; availing themselves of all the great and gracious results of time and toil, but meanly holding themselves apart in a selfish indifference to the common weal! But, on the contrary, how should all that has been done for us, from Adam to the present, lead us to accept, in view of the race, the terms of

the text, "For their sakes," and to devote something of time and interest and labor and means to subserve the good of others! "For our sakes" must be translated into "For their sakes" by a worthy industry, a strict justice, and a willing generosity, or an un-crossed claim will stand on the Divine ledger, and some time and some where we shall be called to face with shame and, it may be, consternation, a handwriting on the wall publishing our neglect of duty.

Again, the devotion of our powers for others in some form of service is a realization of the true ideal of life, and we owe something to our best ideals. They are sent to us as sacred appeals. Our Saviour saw the way of self-sacrifice for the world's good open before him, and with the vision came the sense of obligation; and he passed on through trials to teach the wisdom that has been the light of generations, and to take up the cross that has touched the heart of man with a new love and a new hope. He saw and obeyed; and some of the greatest and finest results yet wrought for man came

out of that obedience. And blessed are all they that see and obey; for it is still changing the beautiful ideal into the blessed actual, and working out the glory of our civilization.

Love is the first of all the principles, and its service the most beautiful activity of human nature. Man is of course great and noble in spheres that relate wholly to himself, and in accomplishments that carry no generous or magnanimous impulses along with them; and neither does reason nor revelation cut him off from these triumphs. Self-culture is a worthy victory. The midnight lamp casts on the brow of the patient student some beams from the great sun of a true credit. The poet who sings his sweet or stirring song just for the joy of his own soul shares the meed of a true merit. The hero who rises to power rises to a not undeserved fame. He who amasses a fortune by skill and industry, as a shield from self-want and a pleasing result for his pains, does a good thing. Self is a legitimate centre, and a self-centring motion is as needful in life as among the stars. Number one is a signal number,

and the personal pronouns "I" and "Me" belong to the language and stand there without any reproach. There must be an "in" as well as an "out"; and self is the first essential to the cognition of not-self, and the necessary point of radiance. Christianity did not come among men to rout them from all that is self-centred and personal, and turn life into a mere outflow along the channels of philanthropy and into exclusive service for others; for this would be a dissipation of our powers and a source of universal beggary and degradation. And yet that part of life which, on wise grounds and in fulfilment of the great law of love, goes out in deeds and services that ameliorate the lot of man, that smooth the path for others to tread, that turn despondency into courage, ignorance into wisdom, sorrow into joy, and night into day, is the part that is likest the offices the angels discharge, and the acts of the beneficent Creator.

Mark one or two special contrasts which will throw light over this general domain of life. A man has, in the course of years,

gained a deserved reputation for just dealing. Never has he swerved from the straight line of fairness in any known instance. His pounds have been pounds, and his quarts never less than the just measure. His yard-stick has been up to the standard. His manufactures have been equal to his recommendations. His word has ever been unequivocal, and maintained after the most manly fashion. His record runs morally clear, and his name passes among men as the synonym for integrity. Now, that is a high rank to attain. An honest man is a noble work of God, and an honor to the race of which he forms so rare a part. Probity is a royal trait, and he who can be trusted like the laws of Nature, in whom there is no guile, no obliquity, no moral flaw, is fit to sit in honorable company with the great ones of earth.

And yet a life of such strict virtue, and nothing more, falls far short of the ideal we have learned through Jesus of Nazareth to cherish. It is too cold and barren, and impresses us with a painful sense of its insuffi-

ciency. We feel it has passed its time in too bleak and barren an atmosphere,—like living on some granite plain, instead of in some floral, fruitful vale. Add the human sentiment, and how transfigured this life appears! Helpfulness is the sentiment that will exalt him, and set the fairer jewels in his crown to flash in the face of heaven and earth. He must do something for others, in obedience to an unselfish law, ere he can stand with the noblest ones of the earth. To integrity he must add humanity, to carry the column of credit to its fairest altitude. “For their sakes,” who stand around him in one domain of need or another, must he devote himself, even as the great Nazarene did, that his name may stand in the full glory of mercy crowning justice.

From the individual pass on to institutions, and it will appear that those which are based on merely commercial grounds, or in the interest of secular education or pleasure, do not fulfil the demand which our Christian training leads us to share in this direction. We look for something more humane and

self-sacrificing. There is a further and finer principle to be embodied, that will impart to institutions a superior aspect. A library set up in a city as a private speculation is one thing; but a library set up solely as a public benefaction realizes and reflects another and higher principle. The first is a matter of business, and legitimate, for business is on the very line of Nature and civilization; but the second is a nobler outgrowth from the life of man, representing a later and better attainment. The first belongs to the natural man, the second to the Christian; for it has been the glory of the religion of the New Testament that it passed forth through the earth to foster organic and social mercy as well as individual charity. "For their sakes,"—this generous impulse becomes at length embodied in institutions, and adds a fairer grace to their existence.

But personal service for others is ever a simpler and safer matter than organized benevolence; for into every unselfish and generous institution the self-seeker is sure to come, at one stage or another, and with a Satanic

greed divert the golden current, touched with a divine intent, to his own private emolument and advantage. There are those who are so cruel and so base that they will even rifle the charity-boxes, and steal the bread and the raiment from orphans and widows. As wolves are said, in the terms of the sermon on the mount, to array themselves in fleecy robes that they may come unsuspected into the flock to slay and gormandize, so are there men so wolf-like in treachery and voracity that they will steal into the avenues of public benefactions to glut themselves with unholy plunder. Indeed, such are more brutal than the brutes; for it is said the lion will not molest anything that is sickly and feeble, and the hawk scorns to touch the callow and unfledged bird. It would seem that these monstrous mortals, bankrupt alike in conscience and in humanity, can be fitly likened only to the fabled vampires or the fabled fiends. There is no trace of the genuine man left upon them, not to speak of the man who has been ennobled and humanized by the spirit of the Master. They

would turn grave-robbers if body-snatching were only sufficiently profitable, or would sell their own parents or children to base purchasers if the price were ample. They have no mercy left in them, but will deliberately, for month upon month, devise to steal the hard earnings of the poor, and awaken the wail of distress along the ranks of the weak and old. All the public charities are exposed to the craftiness and the wiles of these heartless and hardened wretches; and every little while we are stung by fresh rascalities of the kind. The offence is rank, and smells to heaven, and is an ample provocation for drawing forth the lightnings of vengeance. And vengeance will come. It is no enviable thing to be a fugitive from justice,—to think of the past with shame, and of the future with dread; to endure a haunted sleep by night, and a remorseful experience by day; to find sweet sounds striking upon the soul as a torture, and beauty turning to a reproaching angel, and the light of the stars piercing the heart like arrows of judgment; to wear a dishonored name. In deed and in

truth, does a flaming sword stand between such and Paradise; and never but through the agony of repentance can they again enter the beautiful abode.

The laws of the universe have not failed, and to-day, as of old, there can be no peace for the wicked. But while we rest in the assurance that these will get their due, with all others, from Cain down, it would still gratify the temper aroused by such conduct to see the fiery bolts falling on guilty souls, and to hear the outcry for mercy.

“For their sakes I sanctify myself,” said One, eighteen hundred years ago, whom we still delight to honor. “For their sakes,”—what glory in those words! “For their sakes,”—oh, had all the cruel and the dishonest ones of the earth felt this Divine impulse, it would have turned their hands to tenderer and truer offices, and plucked their names from the roll of infamy! “For their sakes,”—who can recount the fair deeds and the sweet joys that have ripened out of that purpose! The mother knows them as she ministers to her children; the reformer knows them as he

shields the tempted and saves the lost; the Christian has daily taste of their richness as he scatters good cheer along his path, and causes hope to sing in many a heart, and awakens the nobler sentiments of human souls. “For their sakes!” Let it be emblazoned as one of the central texts of the Christian religion, and carried forth in daily practice among men!



IX.

CURRENT TENDENCIES IN THOUGHT
AND LIFE.



IX.

Current Tendencies in Thought and Life.

Can ye not discern the signs of the times? — MATT. xvi. 3.

IT is to be said of to-day with more of truth than of any previous era, that there are general tendencies of thought and life sweeping through it. The modern stream of influences is at once wider and deeper, and bears more along with it than any current known to a past age; and this fact is to be accounted for on several grounds. The man or era that is low in the scale of development is never so sensitive and receptive to any new idea or influence as the man or era that has risen above a primitive stolidity and indifference. What Paul said of the highly cultured Athenians, that they did nothing but hear or tell of some new thing, could not be said with anything like the same

truthfulness of a ruder people. The ignorant rarely change their views, are reluctant to engage in mental toil, and not prepared to note any superiority of the better as compared with that which they already hold. Hence, religion and life in China and in Turkey rarely or never change. There is no flow; no new currents arise; a fresh idea meets no hospitality, and makes no converts; heresy is unknown, and progress makes no part of the people's history. But the Greeks delighted in mental stir, and coveted the new and untried. So is it with all advanced states of society. What Paul found at Athens he would find in many modern cities and lands,—an openness and eagerness of man towards new theories and bold investigations. Hence any new scheme of philosophy, or new conjecture in science, or new notion in political economy, or new announcement in theology, that in an earlier day would have passed by unnoticed, is now hailed with delight, as affording a fresh study, and is likely to carry the franchise and favor of the people on the score of their exclusive gaze at it, which for the time leaves

all antagonistic and often more truthful views out of sight.

But the modern stream of tendency, whatever it may be, is not only accelerated by our mental eagerness, but by the increased means of communication. Once a new idea and influence came among men at a great disadvantage. A fresh view could only wait in some corner for a long time, and from its obscure nook it could only go abroad on foot, as it were, toiling on slowly from mind to mind. Or, to vary the figure, any new stream rising among men could only flow along for a good while as a mere rivulet in the human landscape, and must needs pass slowly into the proportions of a river or a tide. Hence there were no startling currents of idea and impulse suddenly rushing forth among the people in those slow days. But it is no longer thus. Ideas now travel literally with the swiftness of the lightning, and any man's morning verity or heresy may be flashed across the nations before the setting of the day's sun, and countless hosts will be found taking sides, and a new stream of tendency

will swiftly appear on the scene. Since the era of the printing-press, and travel by steam, and conversation by electricity across continents and seas, the intelligent masses have become much as a single mind and heart, and are passing at each hour or day or week into much the same interests and biases and driftings. Hence we live in an era that is one of sudden and turbulent currents. But there is nothing to be greatly deplored in this modern fact, since if the tides rush in, they also rush out; action and reaction being equally speedy, the swift heresy will the sooner spend itself, the rapid stream of error will quickly reach its limit, and the happy re-flow begin; and the better and diviner tides, rushing thus over the world, will the more readily scatter their blessings, leaving the wide green fields and rich glowing fruits. No longer can the false be as enduring as once; a cloud of error can no longer hang a thousand years in the sky as in the olden days: for some better thinker, rising here or there, it matters little where, will shoot the light of truth into it, and lo! the age will instantly stand in the radiance of that light.

Let us now briefly review some of the currents flowing along amid our own time. A marked tendency of our day is one that appears on all sides,—a tendency to a more rational and free thought than has characterized any past age. Whereas authority, tradition, blind assent, held supreme sway a thousand years ago, a vast sway even a hundred years back, and holds a wide sway still, yet the tendency is to rationalize more and more, and put every question and usage to a new test. The intellect, so long asleep, or so long oppressed in the presence of custom and authority, is now well awakened. It has won a privilege since the Protestant Reformation that is the most signal victory of modern times. The mind is the dominant factor in the life of our time, and it fearlessly peers into realms, and criticises ideas and customs, which a century ago it dared not approach. Its advance has been hotly contested, and is still; but its progress has been steady, till to-day it can be truly said, that the Bible, the priest, the Church, and the venerableness of antiquity have no authority with the foremost minds

on the old grounds of their avowed sacredness, but only as the one or the other meets the rational demand. Of course a thousand superstitions once cherished, and customs once honored, have been obliged to flee before this advancing reason. All along the path of this mental ascendancy lie the ruins of old creeds and ancient rites; and we are beginning to smile at the ideas and usages that once entertained as a matter of course, and that we should then have called in question with a sort of horror and loss of sleep. The new tendency of theology has sternly opposed these. On many a field the Church of Rome and the Church of John Calvin and the Church of John Wesley and the Church of John Murray has marshalled itself in line of battle to arrest the march of mind along its rationalizing path. The custodians of the past have not liked the free thought and bold research of the modern time. The lingering paganism has cried aloud as an independent reason has confronted them. The demons do not like to be cast out. Error shares a love of life. Tradition stoutly and angrily urges

the old plea that possession is nine points of the law. But all this is in vain. The new era of thought has swept on, till at length the better classes of people are calmly and fearlessly sitting down to every problem to study it out and comprehend its merit or lack of merit.

The preacher at length is only a debater with the people, and carries none of his old-time authority. He has lost his clerical prerogative; his priestly robe serves him to no purpose. A hundred years ago in New England the men of the congregation formed on the Sabbath morning an escort outside the church door, and lifted their hats as the parson, in flowing gown, passed up between the two columns to the temple-door. From the pulpit, lifted far into the air, to signify the superiority of its occupant, he gave forth a message that was accepted, and not discussed. But to-day the minister in the foremost communities is only one who is offering the people his side of the great debates that are now going on, and who expects the people will make up their minds about as they

please on his messages; who expects to meet his hearers during the week on the street corner, and have them tell him that his last Sunday's sermon seemed quite rational, or quite out of joint with reason. He no longer expects them to take his word as a finality. And every true minister will desire nothing better than this, since free-thinking is the hope of truth and the only basis of a deep and vital conviction. In fact, every true minister must see that one great reason why religion has rested so lightly and loosely upon the life of many has been that it has not come to them through their free thought and the rational avenue. If religion has not a sure friend in logic, and will not fare best in an open field of discussion, so much the worse for religion; for logic is to be the method of the future, and an open field is the arena into which the age is crowding.

But this rationalizing tendency is likely for a time to err through exclusiveness. The reason of man, thus now emancipated and become the fashion of the day, needs to guard against a harmful usurpation. God has set

around the reason a group of instincts and sentiments to aid and inspire it, and to render it a surer guide. Left alone, it is quite inadequate; but accepting the joint guidance of the attendant gifts of our being, the moral sense, the spiritual instinct, and the heart, and the finer eye that notes the beautiful in all things, it becomes a much safer pilot on the high sea of thought. Already do we see signs of the times that reason is sweeping along alone and in a headstrong fashion; for we can but mark the spreading atheism and agnosticism of the time, which came of an exclusive adherence to reason, that can never find alone the path to God and the goal of faith, but only as it takes into its company the higher and nobler gifts of our being in making the great search.

Now, this sad tendency of the time, which all can discover who look for it, comes with an exclusive devotion to reason, and from standing persistently in the light of the intellect alone. We can only be agnostics thus, and give life to a mortal outlook and to earthly interests. An unchecked mental tendency

drifts us into this dark and cold domain as the flowing Nile would drift us into the African desert. Follow the mind as your sole guide, and you will make a pretty sure and speedy journey into the winter-land of doubt and bleakness. Even as the exclusive mathematician would miss many of the finer lights and nobler sentiments of life, as real as the science of numbers, so the exclusive rationalist is but a partial human being, and sees but narrowly and in part the universe he lives in. But thither our time is drifting. To that goal the eager intellect is sweeping us on. But we need not be alarmed. Our world has never yet fallen to pieces, and it is not likely to do so in the nineteenth century. "There is a power not ourselves," as Matthew Arnold says, "that makes for righteousness." "If man deviseth his way, the Lord directeth his steps." Nature is full of reactions and recoveries. In other words, man is not all intellect or reason, but there are other and even nobler gifts conferred upon him to stand in alliance with the reason, even as the fingers are given to aid the thumb,—I refer, of course, to the soul,

the conscience, and the heart, that lie open to the spiritual realm. In short, the action of the total man gives another verdict than the atheistic or agnostic, and this action is sure to transpire in the course of time. An age of unbelief has many times been rounded by one of faith; and there is no reason to think it will ever be otherwise, since the gift that debates and falls short of religious conviction is no more human than are the gifts that yield spiritual insight and apprehension and faith.

Not so much a doubter and sceptic is the natural man, the man with all his being in action, as he is a believer and a worshipper and a seeker after a higher life and an immortality. As a being with a one-sided development, the reason alone being brought into action, he may doubt, and most likely will; but as a being with all his gifts coming forward abreast, the intuitions and affections fulfilling their offices, he will find an easy path to faith, and give soaring wings to hope. Hence the poets rarely doubt, and woman is seldom sceptical, since the mind in such

cases is befriended by the sentiment. There transpires in them a more total action of the gifts of their being. It is the scientist who is least likely to stand in the wholeness of his nature and to approach religion in a hopeful breadth of vision. Turning exclusively to the earth, and hunting only for the laws of matter, he dismisses the powers that look up and seek the Divine, and which, adequately active, never fail to feel its mystic presence.

As an offset to this agnostic and atheistic tendency we find a new current or drift arising among the friends of religion, from which great good will result. The debate in the interest of faith is now pushed forward to an attempt to establish the existence of God and the reality of the soul and the hope of immortality. The contest wages at this high point and about these vast questions; and it looks even now as if a thousand petty issues of creed and custom were being subordinated to a loftier reflection and effort. The mere details of faith are trivial in comparison with the existence of faith itself. A host of once prominent questions are of little import to-day,

since the few great primary questions overshadow them. The age does not care to hear a multitude of things about God till it is first assured that he is, nor a recital of the spiritual details of time and eternity till it gives in its consent, on adequate grounds, to the reality of the spirit and the fact of another life. These previous questions are now the serious ones, and the thought of the time is turning in that direction; and the result will be a new unity among religious thinkers, a meeting in good fellowship of the religious orders, a dropping out of countless credal trivialities and rising to the broadest issues, a common foe making a common friendship and a common cause. Perhaps the religious world needed just this modern drift of doubt, this agnostic and atheistic turn of affairs, to draw it into a more happy and efficient harmony, and to secure the dismissal of little questions around which animosity and strife have raged, but out of which no saving grace has ever flowed.

Another current or tide that is sweeping through our time is the tendency to luxuriance on the earthly side. When the soul does not

supply to the world its themes and aspirations, the senses do, and the carnal commands more than its share of interest. As higher lights cease to lure, lower ones come into view and beckon us on; and just now with multitudes the devotion is in the direction of the temporal. The reigning sports are athletic,—walking, rowing, racing. The chief sacrifices are made to the eye,—in costumes, arts, and equipages. The great divinity is money. The age is signal in its tremendous enterprises,—its commerce, its railroads, its telegraphs, its arts and inventions. The world is a busy workshop, and in the din and uproar many of the finer voices are unheard. And all this is but the culmination of the worldly tendency launched by Bacon three hundred years ago to counteract the puerile and destructive speculations of the dreaming monks and priests who had the people under their sway. Bacon demanded an interest in this lower world, a devotion to the body, a regard for temporal comforts and conveniences; and directly the age turned from scholasticism to science, from dreaming to ploughing and sowing and

reaping, from building castles in the air to piling marble and granite warehouses and homes, from discussing how many angels could dance on the point of a needle to a debate on political economy and the number of people that a nation may feed and clothe, from the making of priestly robes and altar gew-gaws to the manufacture of boots and shoes, from a chant in the cloister to a service for man amid the daily rounds of life. The age was waiting for a Bacon, and has indeed followed him too exclusively; but when this worldly tendency has had its day, and the nobler gifts come back to their sphere, then man will stand far along in the path of progress, the temporal and the spiritual rising in a grand fellowship. The material frame will be but the fit setting of the nobler jewel of life.

Another sign of the times, to be contemplated with greater pleasure, is the growth of benevolence in the community. The heart of the world is larger and tenderer than it ever was before. This part of religion has shown no signs of decline. There is a great and growing sympathy with the people, and

the old creeds have had to yield and modify just at the point where they failed of showing a true love and compassion. The age, as never before, is averse to cruelty in creed and in act. The demand is that the pagan shall have a chance for salvation, if not in this life, then in the next; that the dying infant shall somewhere find a love to embrace and caress it; that the unsaved in this little round of time shall still be pursued by the offices of grace and discipline as they come to the world beyond. Just here the heart of the time is too strong for the stern faith of an earlier day, and theology must own its sway. And out of the same growing humanity are blooming in great numbers those whitest flowers of earth,—the asylums and charities, the bequests of wealth, and the kindly deeds of men and women along the dark and saddened paths that their brothers and sisters are called to tread. And this new and lovely stream is ever flowing out upon the animal race, and, as never before, mercy and gentleness befriend the useful and interesting brute.

Thus, on the whole, the signs of the times are encouraging; the stream of tendencies flowing along these days is hopeful; and as we must think it is better to live to-day than it was to live a hundred years ago, so we may well conclude it will be better to spend the passing years of earth in the next century than it is in this. The coming age will be the more favored one; since, in the words of Tennyson, —

“Through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process
of the suns.”



X.

THE LAW OF THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT.



X.

The Law of the Christian Spirit.

The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. — ROM. viii. 2.

THAT hardly need be said, in this scientific age, that law is a universal presence.

We cannot descend so deep, nor rise so high, nor journey so far, as to escape its sway. Like the Deity, it is omnipresent; and in the last analysis it is no doubt a correlative of his existence, an expression of his will, a determination of his love. Its empire is without beginning, and without end, and without limit in space; because God is thus boundless in time and presence.

Law moves alike through an atom and a planet; and not an insect glittering with bright hues in the morning sun, nor a seraph glowing in moral and spiritual beauty in the finer light of the Divine kingdom, lives out-

side its great circle of operations. Law embraces all, moves in all motion, rests in all repose; it knows no such thing as retreat from the field of its engagements, or respite from the constancy of its service.

Science tracks it into the secret recesses of matter and of life; and where scientific search ends, because its eye grows dull, or its implements of detection clumsy, still science gives law credit for existence and sway. That which, regarded from one angle, shall seem like chance and caprice, will appear, if looked at from another side, as standing in some sequence of order.

Thus the text speaks of the "law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Note first that the Christian shares a "spirit of life." There is an active impulse in his soul. He has a spirit in him as a condition of life, a character, a realm of sentiment or feeling. The Saviour likens this inner state, in its removal from dormancy and inactivity, to meal in the state of fermentation. The Christian soul is charged with the grace and motion of a finer leaven. This spirit of life is noth-

ing else than the mind and temper of the Master, that stood in such happy contrast with the crude thought and the hard disposition of that pharisaic age, drawn over into a believing soul. Are your ideas those of the New Testament, and your sentiments such as shine along those great pages? Then that is the spirit of life in Christ to you. You have thus clothed your higher nature with the living robes that so adorned the Nazarene.

If you thus accept Christ by a deep and worthy assimilation, his conceptions and impulses will be repeated in you. You will be one with him in fulfilment of his ardent prayer, as you will also be one with that greater life of the Father of which Jesus was but the symbol. To take the man of Nazareth to ourselves in any sense more superficial than this, is not to attain to a true discipleship. We shall thus be nominal Christians, and not real; we shall wear the badge, but lack the living spirit of a follower.

Let us pass now to consider the manifestations of the Christian life. And here you

will see how surely this inner spirit is under the sway of uniform laws of expression. In all the Christian centuries Christian character has moved along certain great and noble channels of activity. Not more surely does the trunk of the tree throw out its branches after an established order, than the spirit of life drawn from the New Testament breaks into well-known lines of conduct. The laws of its unfolding have not changed in these eighteen centuries, any more than the law of the sun's shining, or the law of the flower's blooming. The law of gravitation is not more fixed than that of the spirit of life in Christ.

We may note this law, first, as a movement from the soul towards humanity. In Jesus there was seen for the first time a sympathy that swept past the limits of nation and religious order, and embraced all the race, irrespective of special distinctions. The pagan had not done this, and no more had the Jew. In all the long past the heart had been checked from its greatest and noblest expansion. The lines were drawn, beyond which

it sought not to pass on a Divine mission. The Roman loved and befriended the Roman, the Greek the Greek, the Jew the Jew; but to neither did it occur as a duty and an ideal of life to honor and serve man as man. The generalization was too great and grand for them, under their narrow training, to comprehend and accept. They had not risen to the worship of a universal and impartial God, but their deities were hedged around by local and special interests. Deities were tribal, or they were sectarian; and it was not in the nature of things that their devotees should send out their sympathies beyond these limits. But in Christ we find a new expanse of love, that reached down to the lowest depths of human life, and out to its farthest limit; and this was because he came to possess a new and immeasurably grander idea of God. His love flowed along only with the Divine love, as heat moves along with the far-shining beams of the sun. A sense of the common Fatherhood lifted him out of merely Judæan relations and Hebrew limits into a unity with the race.

It made him, not a citizen of the kingdom of David, but a cosmopolitan, a citizen of a kingdom whose scope includes all time and all space, the poorest of mortals and the sublimest of the angels. His heart burst open and its love flowed along the pathways of this great idea. He stood forth as the true "son of man" and elder brother of human kind, because he was thus the true "son of God." It was a regnant law of the spirit of his life to be thus unselfish as he was, to do good to any and every one, and to set in motion a wave of blessing that should sweep to the ends of the earth and turn all this great field of mortal life at length into a garden, and then pass on to make a boundless paradise in eternity.

The disciples have in all cases grown in sympathy and fellow-helpfulness as they have caught this spirit of Jesus and of God; for its law is that of overflow and outflow. The light is its true symbol; that would carry illumination and beauty and cheer into all darkness. Mark the expansion that came over Peter, so that in his dream he saw a

radiant vision of a sheet, as it were, gathered up at the four corners of the world, and including all souls, to bear them forth for the Divine blessing; and in his waking state ready to exclaim, in terms that the ages had not heard: “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” But the more signal transformation was wrought in Paul. At first a Pharisee of the Pharisees, he finally became a marvel of catholicity and humanitarianism. His hardness melted away under the new spirit of Christianity, and a mellower soul has not graced the court of love. He knew neither Jew nor Gentile, and felt himself to be a debtor both to the Greeks and the barbarians. His prayers rose for all. No man was beneath his notice, and none were so blessed that he would not gladly have multiplied their joys. He bore the “glad tidings” forth as far as his voice could reach, his “enthusiasm of humanity” leading him oft into perils by sea and land; and from his pen he sent forward to all the future genera-

tions the words that he felt would guide and gladden them. Especially did he commend the broad and tender love that he had exemplified. From Christ he took this great principle,—greater than faith, because more unselfish, and nobler than hope, because more practical,—and to do some good every day was the law of his existence.

And all along the centuries, from that time to this, has Christian love bloomed into broad and beautiful sympathies and fair deeds. This is ever the ministering spirit. The chivalry of the Middle-Age knighthood was but its bright manifestation in a dark period. Our modern humanities unfold from its rich depths. The great missionary enterprises of the Church issue from the same source,—a Christian love of man that would carry to him a better condition in time, and the unspeakable boon of an eternal salvation. There is no land where some Judson or Xavier has not penetrated to tell the story of the Cross and to ameliorate the hard lot of man. With a heroism that does honor to the heart, do these men, touched with this broad

love, go forth over the earth; and, as we should expect, this religion of ours alone unfurls its banner under all the constellations, pleading for human welfare in vast regions where the voice of neither Moslem nor Brahmin is heard. It is the necessity of its superior love. Moslem regards Moslem, and Brahmin subserves Brahmin; and there their affection stays its career in content, a diviner breath does not sweep it still on. But a true Christian is moved with a good-will that overarches the race like a finer sky, and that must needs do so, since it is inspired from the soul of Jesus and allied with the love of the Universal Father. The Christian world is full of deeds that make the earth beautiful, and the air sweet, and the days and months cheery, that emanate from this same welling-fountain. Many are the gifts to our common humanity, cast as bread on the waters, which owe their origin and practical development to this expansive sentiment.

But let us note a second law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus: it is the law of integrity, the law of a strict honesty. In the

great Nazarene there could be nothing sinister, no deviation from the right line of truth and fairness, no turning from the high path of the Golden Rule and the road of honor, since his spirit was so dominantly of the moral order, and borne on by so absolute a preponderance of virtue. Its law was the law of obedience, even like that which carries the shining ones in Heaven to the discharge of their upright and beautiful tasks. It seems to me strange that the Church has made so much of some of the inferior traits of this New Testament life, and so little of its rightness or righteousness. His piety is glorified in sermons and songs almost without end. His humility is praised, and his forbearance under irritating provocations. And the Church is not slow to magnify his trust in Providence, even like that of the lily and the fowls of the air. And not to the extent of a single shade would we tone down the bright colors in which these graces are disclosed. But they are not the great traits of his character, that set him most notably on the pinnacle of earthly glory and make him the one sublime and unapproached

model of life. The two wings that bear him up to his high place are his comprehensive and unfailing love, and his matchless integrity. If he was without hardness, so was he without guile. His charity was not more marked than his conscience. His every act was level as the beam that the true mechanic places in the faithful edifice. And truthfully has one of the famous infidels paid him this compliment: "If he died like a hero, he lived like a god."

But this nobility was the inevitable method of his spirit's unfolding. It was simple fealty to the law of character carried to that moral altitude. And by as much as we share this inward integrity shall we find ourselves moving along the paths that the daylight will not serve to bring under the shadow of reproach, but rather to glorify. The true Christian is under the supreme sway of the moral law. He opens out into fairness as the lily in its purity. The Christ-like spirit is just by as sure a measure as it is generous. The spirit of life as it is in Christ bears men by its sure law of integrity along the nobler pathway,

and steadily through the just and honorable career.

Again, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus is a law of gladness. The true Christian is borne out of the region of gloom by the ideas and the sentiments and the elevated character he has attained. He may have his sad hours; but he shares the basis of more happy ones than any other mortal, since he moves along in a nobler and fairer world. His character entitles him to joyance, being as it is a ground of self-respect and a centre of the purest and sweetest emotions. It carries him clear of the gloom of remorse, and the stings of envy, and the fears of vengeance; while it sets him into open and gladdening relations with "the true, the beautiful, and the good," with the glorious realm of better ideas and principles and beings. Christian character is sensitive to the finer influences, as the Æolian harp lies open to the touch of the breeze. What a joy in the love and the integrity of which I have already spoken as characterizing Christ and the Christian! The normal key of these

great sentiments is major, and not minor. They are naturally exultant in their spirit. A long face and a doleful voice were once a Christian fashion; but they as poorly become the life that is noble and the heart that is kindly as sackcloth becomes the wild and free spirit of youth. As the Church rises into a truer Christianity in its creed and its spirit it very naturally gathers flowers around its altars, and hosannas into its music, and cheer into its literature, and gladness into its homes. It was only in an age when art had not yet become glorified with the brightness of the New Testament religion that such pictures as the Ecce Homo and the Mater Dolorosa could be the favorite and popular ideals. To-day the Saviour is more regarded in the joyous scenes of his great career, as he pauses to teach by the seaside, and sits in the pleasant home in Bethany, and grows rapt in eloquence among the Twelve at the Last Supper. And Mary is less fitly set forth as the Sorrowing Mother than as the bright-faced Madonna. And so are all the inspirations of the Christian religion truly

cheerful, and the law of disciplehood is a law of gladness.

Once more: let me suggest that it is a law of this inner spirit, born of the Redeemer, to repose in a clear and strong assurance of immortality. It shares a sense of the enduring, feels its oneness with the realm that does not fade away, and carries its lamp of hope brightly burning. Its faith in the future is not a philosophy, is not a tradition, is not a baseless dream; but as we know there is a land of flowers around us when their fragrance is borne in upon us and made evident to the senses, so does the Christian soul know the immortal sphere from the great inspirations that stream in from it, the bright radiance that is not of this world, the music that comes from afar, and the love that answers back to the love that goes forth in quest. As we know the spring is before us when we feel the soft air coming from the South, and the milder influence of the sunshine, so does the spiritual man anticipate heaven on the score of impressions that sweep in from that quarter. As in the seaweed Columbus found

an evidence of a world lying somewhere beyond him, so in the glimpses of light that float around us, and the whisperings as from some higher realm of being that address our better moods, does the Christian spirit find the witness of the land of immortal blessedness.



XI.

THE SONG OF MERCY AND JUDGMENT.



XI.

The Song of Mercy and Judgment.

I will sing of mercy and judgment : unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.—
Ps. ci. 1.

DN all ages singing has been regarded, and with reason, as one of the signs of inward satisfaction. Admitting that there may be forced songs, the seeming joy not to be found in the heart; that art sometimes carries music rather than feeling, so that the song is simply a performance and not a spontaneity, and represents skill more than emotion; that even melancholy has a monotonous wail that must be classed as musical,—still it holds true, upon any broad view of the matter, that singing and satisfaction, music and gladness, songs and joys, are found in company. Singing is of the heart, and of the heart when moved by pleasurable sensations. We cannot sing in any natural

way, in any sense that is really song, in response to evil, or wickedness, or calamity, or cruelty, or dark and repellent views. We cannot do this except we are monstrous in our nature. If there are fiends, they may rejoice and be moved to music through occasions that carry in their aspects only the blackness of darkness. But the human heart cannot do this. It must have its songs called out by some attractive light, some gleam of beauty or glow of blessing. It must be touched and stirred, as with an enchanter's wand; it must come under the influence of ideas and inspirations that partake of favoring characteristics, to sing in view of them.

Looking at the matter thus, we can understand how David, the singer of Israel, could sing of mercy; for mercy is that attribute of character whose quality and offices are not equalled in their exaltation and beauty and joy-producing power by any other. It is the very queen of graces in its essence and its functions.

The goodness of God is something much more general than his mercy, but is yet less

touching and affecting, is less potent over the deeper heart, and less sovereign over the keys of song. Goodness is the outflow of the Divine nature toward the whole animate universe, including animal and man, superintending their creation in the interest of their highest good, and securing to them countless conditions of felicity; but mercy is the reserve of a Diviner spirit, to be evinced toward the sinful and the guilty, toward man in his self-abuse and aberration and depravity, and takes the form of forbearance, and long-suffering, and forgiveness, and efforts to restore, and wonderful sacrifices to effect salvation. Goodness gave being to all creatures, and gave with that being all the needful conditions of felicity,—not of a mere existence on hard terms, but of life crowned with the resources and occasions of rare delight. But mercy gave to a disobedient race,—recreant to its opportunities, gone wide astray in forbidden ways, ungrateful, scoffing at sacred names and things, lost in sin, wretched in self-incurred consequences,—mercy gave to such a race a Divine pity, a helping hand, a Saviour,

a wonderful abounding of love to aid in setting matters to rights. Mercy comes on a mission of redemption. It comes to sinners, and waits for them, and works for them, and gives itself for them, that it may save them. It is the angel that follows after every wanderer, carrying persuasion in one hand, and pardon in the other. It is grace abounding and superabounding against sin, the Divine Heart refusing to let the sinner have his own way and suffer the bitter results of his own folly. It would shield and reclaim. It would find the lost. It yearns with compassion toward them, and is full of pity for them. It cannot forget them, nor cast them away and be at peace. It is never footsore in its pursuit of those who fly from their true good. And is there any love like this redeeming love, and any song like the song of redemption?

We would not underrate the Divine goodness that makes general provisions for all life on so liberal and loving a scale; that lays infinite skill and infinite power and infinite patience under tribute to devise and to provide for all beings, from the lowest

zoöphyte up to the highest seraph, adjustments that are so generous and so joy-giving. To that goodness the living universe, through all its gradations, owes a debt of gratitude for ministrations of favor. There is not a being exempt, not one. The smile of Providence carries summer and gladness even to microscopic animalcules. And as being enlarges, and capacity is made more liberal, favor increases. Demand is met with generous supply.

Behold what is spread before the eye of diversified beauty! the manifold and absolutely marvellous arrangement of forms and colors, the uncounted and countless visual charms of jewels and precious stones, of grasses and flowers, of leaves and fruits, of birds and beasts, of clouds and stars, and of the "human face divine," — so far as the divineness still holds! Surely the eye is a debtor to God. And not less is the mind, that, instead of being confined and kept in darkness, is called to a free range of a realm of ideas that includes the glory of theology, the charms of poetry, the lofty themes of

science, the enchantments of art, the inspirations of history, the stirring conceptions of the living present, and the radiant visions of prophecy. And has the heart been overlooked, or has the soul been left without remembrance? Nay; the Divine goodness is equally liberal in its furnishings forth for every attribute of animal and man and angel. That providing Hand never withholds, never grudges, never puts any on short allowance. No obscure infinitesimal of life, no subordinate faculty of any being, is overlooked. The goodness of God, surely, should inspire the song of the heart. We would have none underrate the glory of this attribute of Deity, but would have all sensible of their indebtedness to it.

And yet I see something in the Divine mercy, in the spirit of God in his relation to a world of sinners, that makes my heart more exultant than any survey of the more general attribute of goodness. A God of compassion in view of the disobedient, of impleading, of pardon, who goes down and stoops and condescends and waits and loves

and bears helpfulness to prodigals, guilty, scoffing; who opens his arms and his heart to their return; who never fails to be gracious; who is ever close by to listen to the first cry of the guilty soul; who is never asked for even in the faintest way but he is at hand, ready to serve and to soothe, to give his smile and offer his infinite companionship; who sent his Son, not to condemn, but to save; who asks only the sinner's return in love and penitence, no matter how empty handed and tattered he comes, and he shall be reinstated in full favor; who glows with grace towards him, and forgets all and forgives all the moment he turns from sin: it is such a God that most calls for my exaltation.

There is a principle involved in this view that nothing else, so far as we know, can equal. Love towards innocence and beauty is fair to look at, and its expressions are well calculated to affect us. But all this love is only the beginning of the end. Love can take a step that shall pale and eclipse these. And this it does every time it steps over

the limit of regard for mere innocence and beauty, and enters the arena of mercy towards the bad.

When we see the mother standing over against the disobedient child, the bad boy or the bad girl,— the mother pitiful, tender, sad, but not angry, entreating, offering the welcome of her arms, striving to kiss the cloud from the brow, yearning to restore, forgiveness eager at her tongue's end, gracious with her most prodigal graciousness,— it is then we see her more angelic in her motherhood than in any other view we get of her. And so, not the one who sees only the Divine goodness and sings of it, but the Christian, who recognizes in addition the restoring and redeeming spirit of the Most High, has the greater reason to sing and be glad.

When you take a guide to make the ascent of the mountain, and he is kind and generous so long as you keep the right path, you have occasion to rejoice, and come to feel a love for him by reason of his favors. But if you get lost, and fall into the perils of the

wilderness, and cannot find your way out, and the guide comes after you and spends the night in searching for you, and gives himself lovingly to the work of your rescue, and at last finds you and shares his joy and his store with you, and leads you back in safety, what is your feeling then? Would you not yield him greater attachment still? And would you not say: "Let the welkin ring with the chorus of acclaim that hails him returned in triumph"? And so can the redeemed sing as none others. So shall mercy call forth the hosannas of the heavenly host.

"I lost myself, and the Lord found me; I erred, and he came bearing me light; I sinned, and he saved me: and shall I not sing unto him, shall I not celebrate his mercy?" Yes, surely I may.

But now the song according to David: "I will sing of mercy and of judgment;" that is the way he puts it,— and shall I not go with him, and strike the last note as well as the first? Shall I not also sing of judgment, as it comes from the Divine throne and falls into the order of the Divine government?

No, if it is not in its nature song-inspiring; yes, if it can be made to appear wise and good and kind. If judgment is vindictive and harsh and magisterial, I cannot sing of it, nor be glad in view of it. If it is exacting and cold, and put forth as an expression of power, and to satisfy in a legal way an outraged majesty, I cannot rejoice over it. If God consults only his own glory, in the spirit of haughty exaltation in its conception and execution, then my heart can give back no note of response that has anything of the joy of music in it. If it is judgment in the interest of pain and penalty only, bound to hold on to its victim throughout eternity, then it can inspire no song. If it is cloudy and thunderous and repellent, I might be hushed to awe, but could not be drawn by it into song. If it comes forth from any lower source than mercy, a disposition to save, and a good-will like that of the good physician or surgeon who gives pain only to shield against greater pain, I cannot offer up a strain in gratitude and praise of it. David did not proclaim the purpose set forth

in the text, in view of a light that was only darkness. He did not contemplate any such judgment as we often see among men, and find ascribed to Deity in the world's theologies, that carries vindictive passion and hardness along its course. Nothing of this kind ever brought out a song.

Could the Puritans, who saw the Divine judgment in the light of a hundred years ago, sing of it? They could bewail and bemoan, in doleful minor, as they did. But is that singing of judgment? Will you put that alongside the exultant and heart-gushing melody of the Psalmist?

When you come to follow judgment beyond the medicinal and merciful intent, and see it laid on, and held on, in the shape of piercing, blighting torment, to be without end, the powers of song are struck mute. We are not strung for joy and the outpouring of music in view of any such issue. I know that some hearts are none too soft, and that now and then they show themselves to be as nigh at least as sixteenth cousins to fiends, and sometimes rejoice to see that they

have caused another pain, and brought somebody to grief. But, thanks to our Maker, there is a point in this bad direction beyond which mankind cannot go; the hardest heart is made to relent. And whoever has grasped the full cruelty of judgment carried over, past a redeeming ministry, to assume the guise of eternal woe, has recoiled and said: "I would not have so carried it." There are enough men better than their Deity has appeared to them to be. A multitude of good men have done a great deal of Divine worship through training and custom. But not in joy; not in the rapture of song. But, rather, in distress and gloom and tears and weepings,— all of which is to their credit. For who would not disown, and justly, even a brother that could be sunny and gladsome before such a prospect for any of his fellows?

But what, in truth, are the Divine judgments? They are guises that mercy takes on; they are mercy's instrumentality, or means, of compassing its end of saving. Mercy is not all pity. It does not exhaust

itself in mere feeling; it would be a poor attribute if it did,—a barren sentiment. Does medical skill end in compassion for the patient? We want our doctor to bring a great deal of heart with him when he answers the call from our sick-bed; but we want him to bring prescriptions also, and such as will be best for us, for the purpose of getting us well, even if they be of tenfold bitterness. So mercy must carry judgmentary prerogatives. Otherwise it is not mercy; otherwise it is sentimentalism and maudlin compassion.

Of course judgments are only the last resorts of mercy in the Divine economy; and for this they move us all the more with admiration. They are kept back and held in the rear of other influences so long as the case will admit. “God does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.” He is slow to punish. His main scheme is not penal, but educational. He comes mainly with a system of positive influences. He depends almost wholly upon training us. He offers us himself to love and to come into

unity with. He sends that beautiful life of Christ to be lived before us and to draw us to itself. He secures to us a gospel, to enlighten and inspire. He makes Nature inviting. He enshrines his spirit in all places to breathe out love and life. And only as all this miscarries and fails, and we are indifferent still and unwilling, and give no signs of right tendencies, but grow more distant, does he deal with us in another way. No parent lays a hand on a child so reluctantly; and for this reason his judgments have even a beauty about them. They linger, and would not come at all; but coming, they are tender, if emphatic, with the meaning of help.

How many times have my heart and your heart lingered, and our eyes moistened, over that passage in John: "For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." He calls sinners to salvation rather than to judgment. He sends Jesus, not to berate them and accuse them and preach to them hard things, but to make the right way plainer and easier and more inviting. Read-

ing that text, who need fear to come to God? When did he ever push any back, or cast reproach upon a home-coming prodigal, or put any to shame that had forsaken sin? How is the Divine sword kept in the scabbard! How is love put forth, and fear left unawakened! Christianity is a trial of all influences that are calculated to lead out the better life, and it hushes, just as much as possible, the thunders of judgment. The Father of us all wants obedience and beauty of spirit and the joy of Christian character, and not penalty.

And in this light we can see what penalty, when at last resorted to, means. It is for our good. The prescription means health to our higher life. And of such an administration we can sing and exult. Gladness is eminently in place, in view of the rod that our Heavenly Father keeps behind his throne to serve his purposes of discipline when moral and spiritual influences fail to carry onward the beneficent work.

We may well rejoice that there is judgment in reserve, since it brings up the rear

of mercy and marches under the same banner and towards the same end,—to save the sinful. It is an occasion of gratitude and joy that the sinner shall at last, after entreaty has been exhausted and positive influences have proved inadequate, be brought up with a square turn in the midst of misery, and be forced to understand his case and to mend his ways.

Blessed is retribution! For dark as are its wings, its heart is white as an angel's, and its hand pulls heavenward! Blessed be the firm hand of the great Musician, that tunes us to the heavenly key-note! It may be that with groanings and wailings we shall have to be brought up out of our life-jangle and discordance, as the loose strings of a violin are wrought into harmony; but the result that must be so secured is well worth the cost. Holiness is worth the price, whatever we may pay for it. Heaven is cheap, even if we are forced to pay a mint of suffering. But then, how much better to come right, and be virtuous on easier terms! As God wants us, the bargain need not be a hard one. The

Lord is ready to make easy terms. He says, "Ask, and ye shall receive." He says, "Whoever will, let him come." He scatters flowers along the way to lure, and opens countless refreshing springs by the roadside, and offers cooling shades and mountain views and ten thousand joys. And he checks us in our wicked wanderings only to turn us upon this heavenly way. Oh, let us come into it and live! O ye favored, come into the path that is not rough, and the way that is not hard! And then your song, like David's, shall be one of triumph: "I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing." Such is the chorus of the ransomed.



XII.

THE FULFILLING PRINCIPLE.



XII.

The Fulfilling Principle.

Love is the fulfilling of the law.—ROM. xiii. 10.

THE admiration of science is its method. It descends from details to the deepest law of things, and striking that, it proceeds to marshal all things in harmony with it. When Newton first grasped the principle of attraction, he at once proceeded to test the scope of its application,—to explain by it the rounding of a drop of dew and the globing of a world, the curved line of a thrown stone and the circular pathway of the planets, the balancing of a mote in a sunbeam, and the balancing of the sun itself in space. And so in all things, science seeks the ulterior and universal, demands the lowest analysis, and evolves the fixed methods.

I have referred to this method of science simply to prepare for the statement that the same method is applicable to morals. Here, also, we would escape from mere details, and enter the deeper region of general principles. And so, instead of contemplating the multitudinous aspects of the surface of morals, and dissipating our care upon the leaves of the tree of life, we would, if possible, descend to the more hidden, but cardinal conditions or laws of being and action, the few grand roots that feed and supply all above them; yes, it may be we would go down deeper still, and find the very trunk-root of all, and foster that as the essential thing to a well-developed and fruit-bearing life. For, in fact, every life has its trunk-root, of one kind or another, that determines the character of its unfolding, even to its leafing and fruitage. It is the root of the upas or of the orange, of the sinner or of the saint. It is avarice sucking up the golden soil and transmuting manhood into money instead of money into manhood, according to the Divine purpose; or it is sensuality drawing to itself all the carnal poi-

sons, and brutifying a divine nature, and turning life into a depraved revel; or it is pride running all to a gilded surface and a hollow display; or the lust of power that sends a child of God seeking for a "little brief authority;" or the love of fame, "a fancied life in others' breath," that turns life into an ignoble chase for a fading wreath. Or, on the other hand, the germinal principle is of better quality and higher promise. It draws to itself health, and mounts into beauty. It feeds from the better constituents of the universe, and ripens them into being, and scatters them forth in blessings. And so all life is rooted; and the domain of morals, and, in fact, the formation of character, is reducible to a few general principles,— perhaps to one central principle, and that is love; for we are told that "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

Let us proceed to test this generalization. And I remark, in the first place, that love is the fulfilling of the law of development; or, in other words, it is the crown and completion of being. Without love life is unfinished, and

character is crude. It matters little what are our other excellencies, if we are wanting this. For power without love is barren and bleak, and too often, as we see in all the unchecked tyrants of the ages, lapses into cruelty; while genius devoid of heart and justice, with none of the milk of human kindness in it, and beauty destitute of the warmth of sympathy, are neither highly joyous in themselves, nor safely to be intrusted to their own spontaneity. We may contemplate them as only filling the place of the rose-bush without the rose, or as the pretentious monument not carried up to its own capstone. For consider who are the characters in history, or in the circle of observation, that we deem the most perfect. Need I say they are not characters noted merely for iron wills, or intellectual acumen, or clear records, or renowned beauty? For these are only the subordinate conditions, or accessories, of completed life. It is only where these, in conjunction or singly, are crowned with love, and subserve benevolent ends, that we award the palm for the greatest perfection of development.

And so of a family, its chief grace is its love. Merely cold greatness congregated beneath a roof, sitting around, if you please, like statues of the Muses,—philosophy here, art there, music elsewhere, and poetry yonder, and coldly self-centred,—should rather have some gorgeous ice-cavern, for fitness and harmony, as its retreat, than any structures that we call a home. We do not object to diversity in fireside developments,—and, indeed, has not Providence signally provided for these by the very constitution of the home? Its ideal, and so far as realized, its actual, is the blending of opposites. There should be no Procrustean process, no repression of normal tendencies, no tyranny of uniformity; but rather, let personalities freely unfold, in whatever healthy direction they may. If possible, install philosophy, domesticate art, foster music, and allow poetry. Give these their embodiment in the home circle. But when you have got all these, and whatever else there may be of similar character, you have not got that fairest development that constitutes the very genius and perfec-

tion of the home. You have not reached that love that fulfils the law of domestic life. You miss that affection without which there is no home. For gather your conditions of convenience and luxury; pile your palaces, story upon story, and bid taste garnish, and servants keep them; lay Nature and Science under contribution for sweetest aromas; make vestments richer than Solomon's; invoke culture from the schools; open broad acres into parks; multiply festivities for troops of guests,—but remember the whole is a gilded sham without love, and the angels would turn from it to the humblest cot, if this grace of graces but crowns its life!

And then observe how imperfect is the spirit of a sect until it rises into the possession of love. There is something Divine in Faith as she stands leaning on the Cross; and her battles have been heroic, and her victories over materialism and atheism full of blessings for souls. The joys of Faith have been real, and the roll of her martyrs is a procession of honor. But Faith only looks up and away from the humanity in which she stands. And

then there is Hope clinging to the anchor, never fearing for the safety of the great ship of the universe or the success of the voyage, — Hope with her flushed spirit, her radiant face, and her far-off look of expectancy. She, too, is of heavenly aspect, and her reign in the life of the sect is fair to look at. But the law of denominational growth, running through the periods of Faith and Hope, culminates in the reign of Love, — Love, fairer than her fair sisters; Love with her broad yearnings and her gentle toleration; Love with her pitiful heart and her cruse of oil; Love with her quick ear, her soft hands, and her swift feet; Love, most happy when most self-forgetful and self-sacrificing; Love, one with God and angels, and “chief among the blessed three.” When she is overtaken by the sect, and made its guest and the inspirer of its life, then it touches a perfection that it could not before, though its faith were as Paul’s, and its hope the fulness of assurance.

And so the divinest aspect of civilization, the sweetest grace in that great heart teeming with distinctions, the whitest flower in its

broad and luxuriant garden, grand with the manifold bloom of human nature, shall be the spirit of genuine love, making all hearts one, and passing the olive-branch of peace through all the earth,—love, the antidote of “man’s inhumanity to man,” and the end of wars, slaveries, bastiles, oppression, and cruel monopolies. Whatever else civilization may develop,—whatever of material grandeur, whatever of culture, whatever of science and art,—nothing shall rank in perfectness the final unfolding of the heart. No star shall wheel into that firmament of glories with such heavenly beauties and holy ministries as that of Love; and her beams shall be shed down upon all else,—upon wealth to touch it with generosity, upon learning and art, piety and social life, to broaden their spirit and aim.

But if love is the fulfilling of the law of development, the completion of being, so, I observe in the second place, it is the fulfilment of the law of service. I am aware that Philosophy has professed to touch bottom at other points, to evolve morals from other centres, to base her expectation of perfect

obedience on other principles. On the one hand, we have had the self-interest scheme advocated from high sources. According to this, it is selfishness sublimated that is going to give us the millennium. Wisely consulting our own good, we shall find the perfect services the ones to be rendered. Self-interest, we are told, broadly viewed, is one with the highest and the best. As between justice and injustice, charity and neglect, piety and profanity,—all perfections of a practical kind, and all imperfections,—a judicious self-reference, our own best good (and this is the supreme motive), is decisive of which we should choose. Granted. Granted that the perfect service, in all relations, is the best for us, and should be, and, indeed, would be the dictate of self-interest broadly considered. But then two objections arise,—Can this continual self-reference be kept from returning upon itself and becoming selfishness? Will not the gas escape from this sublimated and soaring balloon of self-considering morality, and cause it to collapse and descend from its high course? Ah! this expanded

self-interest, gathering the perfect into its ideal and aim, is so liable to be punctured by some pressing passion, and return upon itself. And then, moreover, it is a mean motive when it is the supreme one, even though it might fulfil the law of morals at every point; for when all action is considered and projected in the light of self; when vision and purpose become thus introverted; when the personality becomes the focus of regard; when the idea of self-gain becomes regnant; when the man lets out his powers only that, like rubber tentacles, they may draw back self-enrichment; when giving is based on personal calculations, and the dollar must sign the bond for its return with interest; when duty is balanced in the scale of self-reference, and all life is reduced to an equation of loss and gain,—then, alas for the grandeur of the free, and the glory of the spontaneous!

But, on the other hand, there is a generalization that gives intelligence as the trunk-root in the domain of practical life. According to this, enlightenment is the panacea for all moral evils, and the fulfilling of the law

of justice and mercy. We stumble through ignorance, we sin through blindness, and we walk erectly and obediently through wisdom. The whole question is one of understanding. Great is culture! for our saviors are science and art, literature and the schools. So Buckle and Spencer, so Mill and Lewes, tell us. Of course enlightenment is essential to a perfect civilization. This we would not deny. But is intellectual culture synonymous with character — I mean Christian character? Is learning but another name for holiness? is what I ask. Is knowing the sure antecedent of doing? Is the seeing eye enough? Is vision supreme in the domain of life? To ask is to answer these questions. They need no further refutation.

And so we come back to the text as the only adequate generalization, and affirm that “Love is the fulfilling of the law” of service in all the relations of life. And consider how profound and many-sided this principle is. See how it breaks into manifold aspects, and supplies various motives. Look into the human heart, and observe the many forms it

takes on, the evolutions it passes through. First, as self-love, it holds a fixed place and underlies all action. Then it branches into conjugal love, and is that perfect binding affection that makes one of heart and heart, and that prompts a world of tender ministries. Now it assumes a parental type, and is the fountain of what brooding gladness, of what tender patience, of what far-reaching hopes, of what educating solicitudes! Again, it is filial in its form, and opens up in rich delight and holy trust towards the father and mother. Next, as friendship, it entwines around congenial souls. Then it broadens into a humanitarian sentiment, and includes the race in the scope of its interest, and yearns in pity and helpfulness towards the most abject in ignorance or poverty, and the most abandoned in sin,—becomes a ministering principle and power, a good angel in the earth. And at this point of its development as a human instinct it breaks yet once more into branching glories and uses, projecting itself through the dominant moral nature in the form of sympathy with the wronged and

oppressed, and demanding equity between man and man; striking fetters from the enslaved, and teaching "tyrants that they also have joints in their necks;" flowing through the religious spirit as a missionary impulse, and going forth to bear the Bible and plant the Cross in all the islands of the sea; ascending through souls that beat in special sympathy with neglected childhood, to shelter and bless; and speeding the merciful to the haunts of sorrow and the beds of sickness, to comfort and cheer. And, finally, observe this principle turning upward in deferential regard for the Deity,—becoming the love of God and the glow of worship. How wonderful the depth, the breadth, the height, the diversity, of love! What branching from its fertile root! What outgoings from its divine fulness! And so, how evident is it that the text contains the ultimate analysis of motives! How clear that love, breaking into all practical directions, is the fulfilling of the law of service! Enlist the affections, and duties become desires; engage the heart, and the fidelities are spontaneous outgoings.

Base manners on any other condition than this of kindly regards, so that they shall not be heart-manners, and what have you? Possibly fine acting and gilded display towards a few, but no broad and general fulfilment of the social laws. You have an etiquette that is exquisite within a small range, within its clique or caste, but that is vulgarity itself on the breadth of the world; that reaches its dainty fingers forth most gracefully to contact with the elect, but that makes free of its reproachful foot towards the non-elect; that has no more of Christ in it, or of divine gentility, than a doll has of human life! Only love is equal to good manners, or an adequate trunk-root of all this branching and leafing and fruitage of the social life.

And then, as a final illustration, observe how love is the only sufficient source of ministries to the needy and the erring. No matter how liberal these may be on any other basis, they are not Christian or ample. Let wealth fill the charity-boxes to repletion, and organizations send forth their salaried almoners, and every case of nakedness and hunger and sick-

ness receive quick attention, and yet how far is this from the ideal philanthropy! You have only the vehicles of charity, without charity. You only touch the poor with fingers of ice. You do not cheer their loneliness, lift the burden of their solitude, soothe the aching of the heart, banish the cloud by the glow of a divine presence. Yes, even our benefactions must be kindled by love, to be perfect, and the almoner's hand must be warm and soft by the abundant presence of the heart's blood in it.

Finally, if love is the fulfilling of the law of being and of service, so is it of the law of influence. Love is the centre of supreme power, and the condition of final victory. In the strife of sources and the antagonism of principles, this shall triumph. In the old legend, the giant that had defied strategy, and withstood argument, and spurned law, and twisted swords as if they were reeds, was finally taken captive by the soft hand of a child, and changed to docility by the mild grace of its heart. And so the hideous monster of evil, fearful in all his dark and

depraved guises, shall yield at last to the gentle sway of this Divine principle.

Once, as I was travelling on the upper Mississippi, our steamer ran aground, and we were delayed several hours before the next steamer arrived to draw us back into the stream. Meanwhile we were beguiled by the romance of the scenery and by the music of a flute played by one of the boat-hands, with a skill rare for an amateur. But the charm never to be forgotten was the return of the music from a precipitous cliff on the Minnesota shore. But if that rocky ruggedness responded music for music, what divine answers shall not the hardest human heart give at length, when the music of a perfect love winds into its living recesses and touches its sensitive chords!

Ah, yes! the Love of the universe, undying, ever-pursuing, combining more and more, is a sure guarantee of redemption,— the soft but sovereign hand that shall receive a willing obedience, and the celestial music that shall be echoed with universal accord!

XIII.

RELIGION THE VITAL BOND.



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That they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. — JOHN xvii. 21.

HAVE selected this text as affording a fitting introduction to a brief discussion of the generic nature or essential element of religion. There have been, and still are, a great many systems of faith and practice in the world ; but in all these, whether ancient or modern, there is something that entitles them to be called religions. They may be pagan or Christian, visionary or logical, crude or refined ; still they share in common a principle or a posture that is religious, that removes them from the category of the secular into the circle of the sacred ; and the inquiry which I now pro-

pose is, to analyze and set forth that central or distinguishing element.

Taking the word "religion" and analyzing it, we find at its root the signification of a bond. It is from *re* and *ligo*; and *ligo* means "to tie," "to bind," "to unite." Our common word "ligament" is from the same source, and suggests the central fact of religion, which is a bond, an attachment, a ligature, so to speak, and an organic alliance; and the two factors are God and the soul,—the great object of thought and feeling, of love or fear, or worship and obedience, the higher presence and hidden ideal, and the spirit of man. Wher-ever we find an upward reference of this kind, linking the devotee to Deity, no matter what aspects that Deity may assume, or what name he may bear,—Brahma, Jehovah, Great Spirit, or Father,—there we find the distinguishing principle and posture of all religion, its primal and inmost feature in all times and ages. It is vital contact and one-ness, from below upward. It is an upward reference, viewed either from a pagan or Christian point of view; the terrible regard, it may

chance, of superstition, blighted with fear and consummated in servility, or the worship of love that blooms in trust and ripens in the joy of communion; the deference that, impelling to sacrifice, finds its awful expression in the crushing car of Juggernaut, or the kindling pile of sacrifice; or that, inspiring to service, is revealed in a worship that is the vestibule to noblest work, — the unity, in a word, that, as it is found in paganism or in Christianity, involves a low or a high plane of being and bond of relationship. And it is this last and highest unity with God through Christ that my text both asserts and craves: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

For, looking all through the career of Jesus, his oneness with God is the patent fact. The bond is perfect and constant. The gracious link is never sundered. The tie holds wherever he stands, and through all his course. Now it gleams in the moment of joy, and now, like a living ray, it shines in the night of suffering. Through the beauty of the flower his

heart penetrates and unites with the Divine; beyond the sparrow, flitting across the blue sky, he sees the background of a Universal Providence; the grass reflects a present goodness; the wind is vocal with the breath of the Spirit; the auroral morning and radiant evening are “opening vistas” to the Divine Presence. Everywhere there is life and love, and the universe is but a vast tabernacle in which he stands face to face and heart to heart with the invisible Shekinah.

And it was this constant and exalted unity that constituted the religiousness of Christ. This made him. Through it came his wisdom, interpreting truth so clearly,—his love, comprehensive as that of God, gilding the whole race; his hope, outreaching the duration of sin, and claiming a future of universal obedience; his courage, that nothing could daunt, and his integrity, that nothing could bend.

Religion, then, is the tying of the soul to God through faith and feeling. For where you find man, there you find the putting forth of the soul. On the lowest plane, it is but a

blind groping for an object to grasp; on its highest, it is a Christian recognition of and fellowship with the Father. Its true end is conjunction and communion with the Perfect. Everywhere it is an upward tendency and a bond, a living link; but in Christ it is a unity with the God of all perfections.

In the light of this definition of religion we have clearly suggested, on the one hand, the greatness of human nature. We see that the temporal and the earthly cannot satisfy it. Out of its rich depths springs into life an earnest for the hidden and the enduring,—yea, and for the perfect. For all the way along, not only has the Scriptural bond existed, but it has been ever transferable from the lower to the higher,—thus reflecting its real capacity and its far-off destiny, as in the first feeble flutterings of the young eagle on the rim of its nest, and the short flights that follow, we discern the proud voyager of the upper air and the master of the boundless space. How signally does the soul disengage itself from the dust! How soon it seeks to ally itself with a higher principle and a

diviner element! How inevitably it manifests its spiritual nature by striving to bind itself to the unseen and spiritual! How clearly we may interpret its superiority to the earthy in its first gropings for divinity! For even fetich-worship proclaims the dignity of the soul, and idolatry, grasping higher personalities, claiming its retinue of gods, shows the progressive tendency of this inner life; while the acceptance of the perfect Father, revealed by Jesus, decides its true goal. If we are only dust, wherefore this reaching forth and yearning for the spiritual? If we are simply matter, why do we court a bond with spirit? If our level is with the earth, why do we toil so instinctively to disengage ourselves from it, and contact with the hidden and the highest? I cast these inquiries at the feet of the atheist, and ask him what possible solution they can have, save in the fact of the spiritual essence and immortal capacities of the soul?

But, on the other hand, in the light of our definition of religion as a vital bond we can comprehend its power. On all sides we see the efficiency of living ties. We mark them

as channels of influence and avenues of energy. Along them course the tides of inspiration and flow the motives that actuate and govern life. Wherever the heart is implicated and held by the cohesion of its loves, thence it draws the essence of its character and derives the incentives of its action. That to which it is vitally linked becomes its sovereign. How potent is any great hope over us if we yield to the spell of its influence; that is, if we become one with it! Bind the heart to beauty by the æsthetic tie, and a new life dawns within it, an enchantment and glory. How sure are the reciprocal impressions and conferments of friendship, blighting or blessing, constituting an interchange of evil or of good, a reciprocity of the debasing or of the angelic, according as the living tie runs low or high! How inevitably will sensuality surge up into the life, like a bleak and turbid tide, where the end of desire is indulgence! What direful infatuation lies in this lust of excess, bending every noble power of mind and heart to the fatal spell, enslaving imperial genius, blasting divinest affections, saddening the

most regal conscience, and trailing the loftiest ambitions in the mire of pollution,—in a word, brutifying the image of God! Behold the victims of this bond,—men in the midst of their years, young men, and fair women sacrificing all that is worth living for through the misplaced allegiance! On the other hand, how surely will nobler characteristics fill the being, and better promptings direct the energies, if human nature be linked by living ligatures to “the True, the Beautiful, and the Good.” In a word, our bonds explain us. They command our purposes and lead forth our activities. And in this we find the power of religion, of the soul’s upward reference.

For we shall see, if we look through history, that the most effective of all inspirations, and the grandest of triumphs of every kind, have really been the outgrowths of a divine allegiance. Go stand by the solemn pyramids, towering far upward; go learn the secret of the ancient wars; find the root of the old mythologies; mark the spirit that excavated the catacombs and projected the Crusades, that built the columns and sprung the arches

of St. Peter's and all the old cathedrals, that colonized Plymouth Rock, and that carries the civilization of Christendom to the far-off places of the earth; penetrate to the very centres of life, and trace the springs of action in all the world, and you shall find that religion has been and is the animating impulse. For God, men have been brave, self-forgetful, and mighty. A divine faith and love explain the heroes and martyrs who have swayed the currents of history, and piled the stepping-stones, and planted far up the standards of progress.

Yes, the spiritual bond is potent over you and me; for how much is God in our thoughts and hearts, and what activities and joys are called forth by this upward reference! It draws us to our temples, it prompts gratitude, promotes charity, begets trust, and spans the tomb with the bow of hope. Our unity with the Father through Christ is both our strength and our comfort, giving us a heaven to-day, a new earth and a new life, and a heaven "beyond the river," where the parted meet, and where the poor are

rich, and the bond are free, and the crushed arise and advance.

But observe, once more, how our definition of religion as a spiritual bond affords us a ready and sure test of what is religious and what is not. We need no longer mistake in this direction. We have only to search for the vital link tying the soul to God, and wheresoever that is found, there is religion; and wheresoever it is not found, there religion is not, whatever sacred names we apply, or pious signatures affix.

And so it is clear that a mere belief *about* God is not religion, for it does not unite *to* him. It may be a logical statement, but the living sentiment does not run through it. The spirit of the statement is not reached, as a theory of beauty may be held apart from a sense of beauty. Alas, how much dead theology has there been, what empty creeds and barren abstractions, in which souls have been buried like the bodies of old kings in their stony sarcophagi! Yea, it is the living bond of faith we need. It is the belief that fastens us to the Infinite Spirit

that is religious, and none other is entitled to the name; for better are two words that lead up to the Divine and effect an alliance with it, than involve a rich experience and induce life, than thirty-nine articles, or three hundred, learnedly formulated, that never bear the soul above the dust and din of dogmatic controversy.

And as with theory, so with ceremony. It is not necessarily religious,—in fact it is so only when it constitutes a *via sacra*, an access, a bond for the spirit, and not when it interposes as an end. It is only a medium of access to the spirit when it is subordinate and subservient to the deeper sensibilities of the soul. Beginning and ending in itself, as it often does, it is no more religious than any secular act, since there is in it no tie or bond with what is above and beyond. It has no spiritual significance. The sacred symbolry is void of a sacred office. As the glass in our windows may be looked at or looked through, and so become media to the sky and the far-stretching landscape, so may a ceremonial begin and end in itself,—

in which case it is not religious; or it may be an avenue for the passing and re-passing of the very spirit and substance of life,— in which case it becomes religious.

And just here, moreover, with our easy test in hand, we are able to discriminate between a religious and an unreligious morality. Morals may be purely atheistic; and yet as such I would not call them “filthy rags.” They may be conceived and carried out, not as a law of God invested with Divine functions, and as obeyed with an upward reference, but as a law of Nature, or, if you please, as an ordinance of man, the best wisdom of the time,— in which case obedience will be the result of a mere loyalty to morality for its own sake. In this case morals are not religious; but far be it from me to say they are ignoble. I indulge in no cheap cant of depreciation. They are grand, even if atheistic, and the souls are worthy that bring them forth independent of any considerations of God. But when, on the contrary, they are viewed in the light of Deity, and executed in the love of him; when they are

exalted into Divine relations and given a spiritual dignity, and conscience is seconded by faith,—then are they religious, and stand doubly secure. Then duty is not merely secular, it is sacred; and lower and higher motives are combined in its discharge,—just as the noble boy who goes forth from his home may stand true and upright at every post, at once for duty's sake and for the sake of the father and the mother whose counsels linger in his memory and whose love throbs in his heart, and for the sake of his Maker whom he adores, and whose claims he recognizes in all duty. "Mother," wrote back a brave youth from the front at Gettysburg, "Mother, not only because I love my country, but because I love you, I will be a faithful soldier!" And had he also added, "Because I love the God of nations," the circle of motives would have been complete. When we link morality thus to God, we render it religious, fulfilling it with the energy of faith and the ardor of love. It becomes an infinite reality,—not a caprice out of the earth, but a law written on the sky and last-

ing as eternity. It is the majestic thought and will of the Most High! It is one in all the universe, and appeals alike to man and angels. And so morality becomes a part of religion when thus given an upward reference; and as its aspect thus broadens, so are its behests the more emphatic, and its dictates sublime.

And let us remark, in conclusion, that if religion exalts and supports morals, so may it glorify and transfigure all things; that is, like Jesus in Judæa, we may find higher meanings in every aspect of Nature, and sanctify every experience of joy or sorrow, of life or death, by bearing it into the Divine atmosphere. All work, even, may be set in some shape of alliance with Providence, and thus become an offering of love, and be touched with something of the sanctity of religion. Thus Paul may plant, and Apollos water, with some sense of the Deity that insures the increase through sunshine and air and the mystery of growth. The mechanic may apply his arts with some reverent consideration for the Great Source of the materials he uses and

the laws he everywhere meets. The poet may sing, the scholar think, the prince wear his crown, not without a sense of dependence and a spirit of gratitude,—in which case a spiritual light shines through their toil, and life will be all the fresher and nobler for touching the Life that inspires.

Let us, then, seek that affiliation with the Divine, that tie of faith and bond of love, that was so perfect in Jesus, and filled him with such purity, peace and power, patience and courage; that has been so conspicuous in the great lives of all the past, and largely made them what they were; which is so normal to our being, so friendly to our best life, and so fostering of that hope that flies forward to the perfect and the eternal!



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